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Narrative of the life and
ministry of Rev. John Seger²

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NARRATIVE

OF THE

LIFE AND MINISTRY

OF

REV. JOHN SEGER,

Former Pastor of the Baptist Church at Hightstown, N. J.,

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

A FEW WORDS OF COMFORT, EXHORTATION, AND COUNSEL,

TO VARIOUS CLASSES OF READERS.

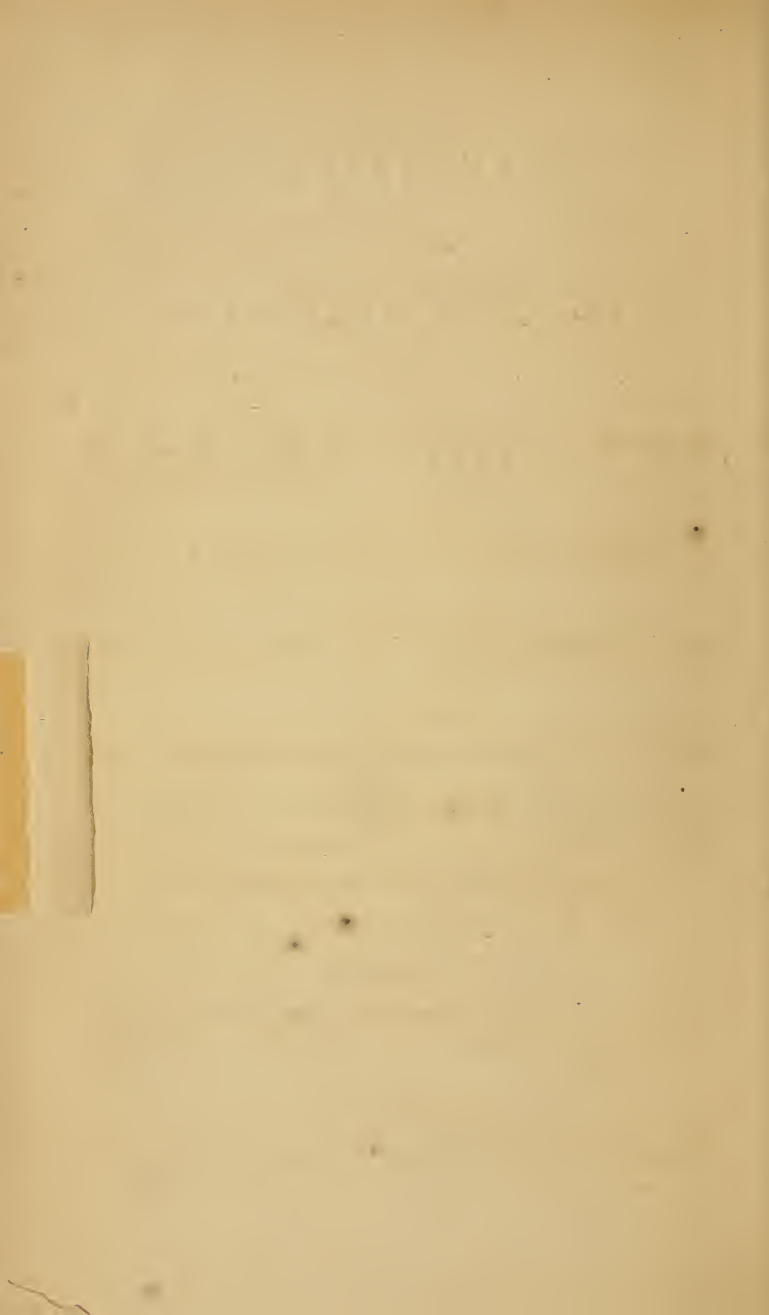
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John Seger

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INTRODUCTORY.

I HAVE been induced to write the following Narrative, by the solicitation of my highly respected Brother, the Rev. Lewis Smith, Pastor of the Baptist Church at Hightstown, New Jersey, of which I was a former pastor for the term of eighteen years. Prior to this, the thought had never presented itself to my mind that it would be a matter of sufficient importance to claim my attention, or to be interesting to others. A more mature reflection, however, while reviewing the wonderful display of divine grace in the salvation of such a lost and guilty sinner as I found myself to be, when God began the work of grace in my soul by his Holy Spirit, has awakened within me a renewed admiration of the love and suffering of my blessed Savior, who gave himself a ransom for me. Such reflections as these, I found to be well calculated to remove any hesitancy that may have remained upon my mind ; indeed, I at once discovered that no subject could furnish me with a more delightful theme to dwell

upon. But on the other hand, a feeling of such a deep sense of so much imperfection as has been mingled with my best performance in religious duty, has had a tendency to cast a gloom upon my mind, and a shade over my whole life.

However, it is with a considerable degree of satisfaction that I can say I am not conscious of having violated what the world terms strict moral principles. But, alas, how far short this comes from that perfect holiness and rectitude which my God requires, and that which my soul thirsts after. There is nothing that can so enlighten the mind as a knowledge of the Deity, hence says Job, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eyes seeth thee, wherefore, I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." The more our knowledge increases in relation to the divine character, in the perfections of his holiness, so, in proportion, will be our knowledge of our own imperfections. This is what caused Paul to cry out "oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He refers us to Christ as his only hope. Our salvation is all of free sovereign grace from first to last; "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he hath saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." So that, if I ever get to heaven, it will be through Christ, my blessed Lord, and

the renewing power of the Holy Spirit, by whom I wish to be guided while writing this narrative, in which I shall attempt to narrate some of the most important events that have occurred during my life of seventy-seven years, which has brought me almost to the end of my journey, this side the grave. Of this I am repeatedly reminded by the infirmities of decaying nature.

Whether this narrative may die with me, or not, I can not say ; but should it live and speak while this poor withered body shall lie mouldering in the grave, may it speak the truth and God be glorified. The plain garb in which it is clothed, will not be likely to recommend it to the attention of those who are walking in the high path of life, such as the great and noble of the earth, or secure it a place in their palaces, yet it may find a lodging among the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus ; and what should I wish for more ? for they are my brethren and companions in the Lord ; they are the excellent of the earth, whom I expect to meet in heaven, and with whom I expect to unite in the song of redeeming love, for ever and ever.

Having concluded my introductory remarks, I shall now enter upon my proposed narrative ; and in order to make it more agreeable to the reader I have concluded to divide it into chapters, and should it ever come to the light of day, so as to meet the eye of any

one who may be disposed to read it, may the blessing of God attend it, to the good of the reader, and God shall have the glory ! Should imperfections be found in this little book, as doubtless there will, it will be sufficient to claim the indulgence of the reader to say that it was written in the seventy-eighth year of my age.

CHAPTER I.

MY PARENTAGE AND EARLY CONVICTIONS.

I WAS born in the city of New York, on the fourteenth day of February, in the year of our Lord seventeen hundred and eighty-six, three years before Washington was elected President of the United States. My Grandfather Seger was engaged in a very extensive branch of business, the manufacturing of ship anchors, which gave employment for a large number of hands. He was a business man, but did not concern himself much about matters of religion. My Grandmother Seger was a very pious and devout Christian and a member of the First Baptist Church under the pastoral charge of Rev. John Gano.

My Grandfather and Grandmother Thompson, together with my mother, were members of the same church (he being deacon). He was a very pious man, and made himself use-

ful in the cause of Christ. He was engaged in a very lucrative business, he being owner of what was then termed the tea-water pump, which supplied the city with water for cooking and drinking purposes, it being conveyed in hogsheads on carts. This operation gave employment for a great number of hands. My father was not a professor of religion, but was considered a pious man. His married life was very brief, for he was seized with that hopeless malady, the consumption, which terminated his life at the age of twenty-eight years; leaving my mother with three small children, the youngest being but eighteen months old, who soon followed his father in the sleep of death.

After my father's death, my mother returned to her father's house, where she and her children were made comfortable. When I was about seven years old, my Grandfather Seger died. After his death an old friend of his, who was somewhat wealthy, and was the owner of a large farm, three miles from Peeks-

kill, in the State of New York, offered my mother a home in his family, both for herself and her children as long as she might be disposed to stay. She, concluding that a country life would be more agreeable, at once accepted of his generous offer, and soon found herself and children delightfully situated in a family of old acquaintances. After having lived happily with this family about two years, her father having deceased, and she having come into possession of her share of his estate, a door opened for her to resume housekeeping. At this time a favorable opportunity offered for her to remove to a neighborhood near which the Baptist meeting was held. This removal placed her a near neighbor to a deacon of the church, whose family consisted of himself, wife, and three children, two sons and a daughter (the oldest son being clerk of the Church). This family soon became much attached to my mother, as she was a pious woman. After some time had elapsed, the oldest son, who was a bachelor and about my mother's age,

offered her his hand in wedlock, which in due time was accepted. A short time subsequent to this union, we moved on a farm belonging to his father, about three miles distant. This arrangement rendered his father's help considerably less, leaving him with a large farm to cultivate, with only the help of a son twenty years old, and a daughter eighteen. However, no other arrangement could be made.

After we had been settled at our new home a few months I had a very singular dream, in which I saw the old serpent, the devil, who I thought had come after me while I was lying on my bed. He appeared in the most frightful form, so much so that I was made to shudder with fright, and sprang from my bed upon my feet. As soon as he saw this he disappeared. But on my return to my bed he appeared again in the same frightful form. This was repeated during the whole night. This dream made a very serious impression upon my mind, and led me to pray fervently that the Lord would have mercy upon me. I

had heard much of Christ, but still I had no consistent views of salvation through his death. I thought that it was by reforming my life, that I was to make amends for my past sins. This led me to enter into solemn covenant with the Lord, that if he would forgive me I would reform my life, and devote the remainder of my days to his service. I commenced with a full determination to live a holy life ; I laid a restraint upon my words and actions ; I was careful to watch over them in order that I might bring them into subjection to the rule which I had formed to determine my duty to God ; I denied myself of all my boyish amusements ; and thus I set sail, as I thought, with a fair prospect of a successful voyage to the heavenly glory. But I soon found that the wind of temptation, and current of my depraved inclinations, was too powerful for me to withstand ; for every tack I made, I found that I was losing ground ; and soon found myself back near the port from whence I set sail. Thus my convictions passed gradually away,

like the morning cloud and early dew. However, I was not entirely destitute of tender feelings, for I remained more or less thoughtful about my soul.

The second year of our occupancy of the farm on which we lived, some considerable change had taken place in the family of my step-father ; his sister had died, and his brother had received and accepted a very advantageous offer in the city of New York ; so that now his father was deprived of all his help, and he and his wife considerably advanced in life, with the care of a large farm. The family finally made an arrangement for us to make an exchange with the old people, as our farm was much smaller than the one on which they lived. This exchange was brought about to the satisfaction of the parties therein concerned.

Soon after our removal, I had another dream, in which I saw that the end of the world had come ; I saw the fire approaching with great rapidity, and at the same time I

saw a multitude of people lying on the ground in a sound sleep ; I felt deeply concerned for them, and ran in great haste from one to the other, shaking them with all my might, but could not awaken them ; my distress was so great that I awoke from my sleep. This dream has furnished me with a very striking representation of many of those who have attended my ministry, for while I have been warning them of their danger, that they might flee from the wrath to come, they have remained insensible and unconcerned about their future destiny. Alas, how often I have had to exclaim in the language of the Prophet, " who hath believed our report ? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed ? "

A few nights after this, I had another dream, in which I saw that the Savior was to be crucified again ; I thought that I loved him above all beings ; I sought help to prevent the deed, but help could not be found ; no one regarded my pleading, but all seemed disposed to help on with the tragedy. Finally, finding

that all my efforts had failed, I ran and clasped him in my arms, with the request that I might die with him. The love that I felt to the Savior, as expressed in my dream, I never could comprehend until I found the Savior, to the great joy of my soul, in the work of regeneration. Sure this is love that passes all understanding, it being stronger than death. Alas, how often I have seen my Savior crucified afresh in the house of his professed friends ! Oh, my blessed Lord, have I ever had a hand in such a wicked and disgraceful act ? if I have, oh forgive, and let me never prove a traitor to thee again ! These dreams, like the former, left serious impressions resting on my mind.

At about this time, a Methodist preacher and a good man, opened a meeting in the school-house a mile distant from where we lived. His appointments were every other Lord's day evening. I became a constant attendant at his meeting, and soon began to conclude that I was a Christian. As to my outward deportment, nothing could be said

against it, for I was considered strictly moral. Indeed, the preacher himself came to this conclusion, and I soon became quite a favorite of his, and as I was a good singer, he solicited me to take the lead in this part of the devotional exercises. This led on to the improvement of my gift in prayer and exhortation in public, and I believe these performances were highly acceptable both to the preacher and hearers, and myself not much behind in this matter. But alas, I was deceived, and knew it not. I thought that I had arrived almost to a state of perfection. But all this was a delusion. The preacher was so well pleased with my performance, that he appointed me to conduct a meeting on a vacant Lord's day evening, at which time I had a large attendance. Our meetings were very solemn, and many were seen to shed tears.

On one occasion, a very respectable old gentleman came up to me after meeting, with the tears gushing from his eyes, and while grasping my hand said "I am ashamed of

myself that I have lived so long in sin, and you, so young, engaged in religion." But oh how unqualified I was to point this poor aged sinner to the Lamb of God, whose blood alone can cleanse from sin, and save the soul from the wrath to come! Alas, I did not understand the religion of the Bible. And yet, strange as it may seem, I thought all this time, that I was doing God service. I did not intend to deceive myself or others, for I thought that I had arrived almost to a state of perfection, and what the old man had said seemed to confirm me more fully in this belief. O how the mind of man has become blinded by the god of this world!

The main cause of my gaining such a control over the minds of my hearers, must be attributed to my being so very young, being but thirteen years old. My manner was very solemn, and the people had full confidence in my sincerity, and at the same time I was very zealous, and my moral deportment was always considered very correct. I continued

this course of labor with great delight, until I was fourteen years old, at which date a circumstance occurred which put an end to these exercises, which proved a great cross to me, as my mind was completely absorbed in these meetings; but the time had now come for a separation between me and my young companions, which led to a great change in the scenery of my life, as may be seen in the following chapter.

CHAPTER II.

MY CONVERSION.

THE circumstances which led to the change referred to in the latter part of the preceding chapter were as follows : My parents came to the conclusion that it would be to my advantage to learn a trade. The people, at that day, were much more in favor of bringing up their children to labor than they are at the present day. About this time a very favorable opportunity offered, as will appear from what follows.

I had an uncle living in the city of New York, who had recently retired from business, having amassed a considerable fortune by the copper and brazier's business, and had transferred the whole concern into the hands of a young man who had learned the trade with him, and had married my mother's youngest sister. This young man had solicited my

parents to let me learn the trade with him. These were the circumstances which led to my leaving home, and returning to the city that gave me birth, from which I had been absent seven years.

I now entered upon my apprenticeship with my uncle, who had three apprentices older than myself. These were the persons into whose company I was about to be introduced as my future companions ; persons altogether different from my former associates, for although they professed to be of a moral character, yet they were quite loose both in their words and actions ; for they were in the constant habit of making use of profane language, while their general deportment was about of the same character. From these considerations it must be perceived, that, as to my future prospects, they were not very hopeful, but would rather have proved ruinous to my soul without the interposition of the kind hand of Providence. I was not aware of the danger to which I was exposed.

I was now deprived of parental instruction and of those social meetings in which I was so delighted, while every avenue of my young heart was open to those foul spirits who are ever on the alert to allure, by their artful deception.

It was very common at that day for lads like myself, to spend the Lord's day in rambling out of town for a little recreation, and sometimes in sailing on the river. This last amusement had proved fatal to many, and had well nigh proved so to me, for I had fallen in with these habits; still I was conscious that this was wicked and did not comport with my views of religion. Yet the temptation proved too strong for me to withstand, and I had to yield. But upon my return home at night, oh the lashing of conscience! I then felt—"a guilty conscience who can bear?" I would then renew my promises and break them as fast as I made them, and thus my life became one continued scene of sinning and repenting, making promises and breaking

them. Thus three years of my time passed away in one continual conflict. I had lost all relish for the house of God, as I was not acquainted with any of the young people who attended. If I had attended meeting once on the Lord's day, it would have satisfied my conscience in some measure, but this had become too irksome, so that my self-righteous garb which I so much admired before I left home, had now become ragged and in tatters. I tried hard to patch up the old garment ; but in spite of all that I could do, ragged it would be.

Thus passed away three years of my apprenticeship, which brings me to a more interesting part of this narrative ; for the time had now come in which the powers of darkness were to be shaken, and made to yield up their vassal, so long held in cruel fetters ; for he who is mighty to save, said "let the captive go free for I have found a ransom ;" but a dreadful battle was to be fought before I could be set at liberty ; it was fought, and I

gained the victory through the blood of the Lamb. The circumstances which led to this great conflict were as follows: On a certain evening my aunt with whom I lived had occasion to send a message to her sister living in the Bowery about a mile distant; it being a very pleasant evening's walk, I at once offered my services. After having received my instructions, I passed out of the front door, where I found the elder apprentice standing, who, on my approach, gave utterance to a most profane oath. This however was nothing strange, as it was a very common thing with him to make use of profane language. But on this occasion it had a very different effect upon my mind, from what it ever had produced before. I was at once struck with the greatest horror of mind at such wickedness, as I thought that he had defied his Maker. But, oh, the dismay I felt! for in a moment my eyes were opened to see the condemnation resting upon my own soul, for I saw my sins were placed in array against

me; they appeared like so many mountains ready to crush me down under their ponderous weight; my heart was ready to break, while the tears were gushing from my eyes to that degree, that I believe every step was marked with them; such was the anguish of my soul, that I can not describe it or ever forget. Oh how plainly I saw the justice of God in my condemnation! Oh how plainly I saw and felt the force of the language of the Poet—

“And if my soul were sent to hell,
Thy righteous law approves it well.”

I had such a view of the character of God in all his Divine perfections, that I thought if he should place me in the lowest hell I would there praise him; for I saw that he was a being worthy to be loved and admired, and all the wrong was in me. I felt so guilty and condemned, that I dare not look up. I could stand like the publican and smite upon my breast, but dare not make use of his language, for I thought that mercy was clean gone for-

ever, and that I had placed myself beyond the reach of hope. I saw now that all my prayers and exhortations had been nothing but a delusion; my poor wretched heart had deceived me. When I drew near the house, I stood and wiped off my tears, as well as I could, still fearing to enter, lest they should discover the state of my mind. My tears flowed so freely that it was with the greatest difficulty that I could suppress them, and to tarry any longer would not do, as I had been long on my way. I saw that now something must be done. I therefore armed myself with all the courage that I was master of, and entered the house. When there, I could not utter a word; I sat down; my aunt, who stood near the fire-place, gazed at me with much surprise, and some degree of alarm, as I was commonly very cheerful. After looking at me for a moment, she, calling me by name, said "what are you troubled about; is it the things of this world, or that which is to come?" The last word in the interrogation

at once did the work. A shot from a gun could not have been directed with greater accuracy to the object of its aim ; it pierced me to the heart. The tears began to gush from my eyes in torrents ; for I felt as though the very fountain of my soul was broken up. My aunt soon comprehended the nature of my distress, and called in my uncle who stood at the back door. He, being a pious man, was prepared to give me instruction, for he understood my feelings, although I did not utter a word. He sat down and selected a number of passages from the Bible, well suited to console my sorrowful mind ; but this proved all in vain, for I could not claim them ; for I thought that I had committed the sin unto death. After he had conversed with me awhile, he prayed for me, but all without having any effect in consoling my mind. When I was about to leave he handed me a little book by John Bunyan, the title of which was "Grace abounding to the chief of sinners."

On my way home, my tears flowed freely, I continuing in the same state of mind. As I drew near home, a difficulty more formidable than the one I had already encountered, attended me on my arrival. I well knew what I had to expect from a family in which not one pious soul could be found. I had nothing to look for but sneers and ridicule, especially from the young men. However, I wiped off my tears as well as I could, and entered the house and delivered my message in as few words as possible. Yet it was not done without betraying my feelings, although no remarks were made; for I passed quickly into my bed-room, where I sat down and read the little book that my uncle gave me, in which I found my feelings so fully delineated that it became difficult for me to read, as my tears flowed so fast. I read and wept the greater part of the night.

The next morning found me in the same sad state of mind. My mind seemed to be bordering on despair, yet I strove to conceal

it. This I found impossible, for I could not so far suppress my feelings, as not to be visible in my countenance. When I met the family at the breakfast table, they discovered that a very heavy pressure was resting upon my mind. This was visible, not only in my sad countenance, but also in my loss of appetite. They knew that it could not be disease of body, for if so, I would have made it known. However, they soon began to comprehend the mystery. This at once subjected me to many reproachful epithets. At length my burden became so ponderous that I became quite indifferent to their severity, although they persevered so far as to signify that I had communications with the fiend of darkness. I can not believe that they thought this to be really the case ; if they did, they must have drawn their conclusion from my having absented myself so often for secret prayer ; for I could not stay away. On one occasion, my uncle accidentally entered the apartment where I was upon my knees ; we were both

much confused, yet nothing was said. I think, however, that it must have had a favorable impression upon his mind, as he was particularly kind to me from that time.

After these young men had done all in their power to insult my feelings, and had begun to despair of reclaiming me by such harsh measures as they had resorted to, they now begun to pursue a more mild course, and to expostulate with me, in order to convince me of the danger I was in, by giving up to such a gloomy state of mind, as they considered it sure to lead on to insanity, and thus prove my ruin; and in order to prevent this calamity, it would be advisable for me to accompany them to those places of amusement, the theatre and ball-room. These arguments, however, proved unavailing, for I felt that the wound which sin had made in my heart was too deep to be removed by any earthly remedy. Nothing but that salve which was extracted from the blood of the dying Christ,

and applied by the Holy Spirit, could ever cure and make me whole.

I spent my evenings in reading and praying, while my tears flowed freely. On the ensuing Lord's day, I attended the preaching of the Rev. John Williams. This was done in accordance with the wishes of my uncle who gave me the little book to which I have already referred, he being a member of Brother Williams' church. I took my seat in the gallery opposite the pulpit. The sermon was a very cutting one to my feelings, for I thought that every word was intended for me ; and as the preacher's eye seemed to be placed upon me, I dared not look up, for I thought that he comprehended the whole history of my life. My feelings, while he fully delineated my character, he placed before me in such clear light, as can not be described. I returned home more sorrowful than ever. Brother Williams was a faithful servant of God ; I spent many happy hours with him in his study after I had found peace to my soul ;

but he has long since gone to be with Christ, which is far better.

My distress continued as pungent as ever ; for about ten days from the time in which I was awakened to a sense of my danger, was spent in reading, praying, and weeping. Finally the day of my deliverance came, and what a joyful day this was to me ! The Son of Righteousness arose upon my soul with healing under his wings. The darkness of midnight was at once dispelled, and all was light around me. I received a message from him who spake as never man spake. The message may be found recorded in Matthew v. 4, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." These words dropped from the precious lips of my blessed Savior while on the mount ; and although multitudes have been sharing in the blessings of this gracious and heart-cheering promise, yet I found it as full of consolation as when the first soul participated in its blessings. This promise seemed to come down from the upper

glory, and, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, to be applied to my soul. The very foundation of my prison was shaken, my fetters fell off, my prison doors flew open, and I was brought into the light and liberty of the Gospel. Believing, I rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory. I felt as though I had been ushered into a new world; every thing in nature appeared to be new; I saw my Savior's hand in every thing I cast my eyes upon. The sun seemed to shine with greater brilliancy and glory. The spangled heavens at night, I beheld with wonder and admiration, while I saw in every star a preacher of righteousness. I could unite in the language of the Psalmist in saying "The heavens declare the glory of the Lord and the firmament showeth forth his handywork." I saw that not only the heavens and the earth were new to me, but I was new to myself, and could now understand what Paul meant when he said, "If any man be in Christ he is

a new creature, old things are passed away and behold all have become new."

I now felt that I was complete in Christ, not having on my own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is by faith in my dying Lord; that it is "not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to his mercy he hath saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." I now saw the way of salvation through the death of Christ plainly revealed in the Bible; and how God can be just and yet justify sinners and save them with an everlasting salvation; not *in* their sins but *from* their sins, by the blood of Christ, who is the Lamb slain as the great antitype of the sacrifices made under the law. Under these consoling views, I now went on my way rejoicing.

Before I conclude this chapter, I must refer to a solemn circumstance which occurred during the week in which my soul was set at

liberty, in relation to one of those young men who had been so active in devising plans to lead my soul astray. This young man was seized with a disease which soon terminated his life. He sickened while absent from home. He heard of the happy state of my mind, and sent for me to come and pray for him ; I went, but it was too late ; his spirit was making its way to the invisible world. Where he landed we must leave to be decided at the judgment of the great day.

CHAPTER III.

MY UNION WITH THE CHURCH AND CALL TO THE MINISTRY.

THE ensuing Lord's day, I attended the preaching of the Rev. William Collier, Pastor of the First Baptist Church, whose meeting-house was located in Gold Street, a few hundred yards distant from where I lived. This brother was a good preacher and of sterling piety, but of delicate health and feeble voice. At the close of the meeting, I heard announced the time and place of the weekly meeting, which was held on Friday evening. The next meeting found me there. In the course of the evening, a young brother was called upon to pray. He was the youngest member in the church, being nineteen years old, two years older than myself. His manner and language, throughout his prayer, was so expressive of true devotion and sincere

piety, that my affections were drawn out to him to that degree, that he appeared nearer than an own brother, although he was an entire stranger to me. On his return home, I followed him some distance, in hope that an opportunity might offer to introduce myself to him; but feeling myself so far inferior to him in religious experience, my courage failed, and I returned home much disappointed. However, at the next meeting, I succeeded, and I believe to the mutual joy and satisfaction of both.

From that time, our hearts became knit together like those of David and Jonathan. Our leisure hours were spent almost entirely in each other's company, at which times we found it to be a heaven below. My becoming acquainted with this brother, opened the way for offering myself as a member of the First Baptist Church, although I felt much attached to Brother Williams. However, the distance to his church was a considerable objection, and as it appeared to me that Provi-

dence had marked out my duty, I therefore offered myself to the church, and being received, I was baptized by the pastor, in the North River, on the first Lord's day of April, eighteen hundred and three, being seventeen years old ; and on the same day I was received into the church, and took my seat at the table of the Lord. This was a happy day to me.

Soon after this, I was called upon to exercise my gift in prayer and exhortation. About this time, I became acquainted with a brother whose labors were wonderfully blessed. He held his meetings not far from where the Macdougall Street meeting-house is now located, and I believe that that church owes its origin to this brother's labors. He was a plain, honest-hearted man, and although he could not lay claim to be a learned or methodical preacher, yet he seemed to speak with demonstration and power of the Holy Spirit, and was greatly blessed in the conversion of sinners, and

was the means of increasing the number of members in the First Church to a great extent, and long after his death, this church were receiving the fruits of his labors. This brother, being but a licentiate, had no church of his own, and at the same time, feeling a deep interest in the prosperity of the First Church, appointed his meetings so as not to interfere with its public services. I attended this brother's preaching, at which time I was greatly delighted, being fed with the sincere milk of the word.

About the year 1805, the Rev. William Parkinson, who had taken charge of the First Church, became very much blessed in his labors, and a great revival ensued and a large number of souls were added to the church, among whom were many of the younger class, who like myself, felt zealous in the cause of Christ, and wishing to make ourselves useful, we formed a youth's prayer-meeting, in which I took an active part,

and was looked to as a leader of the meeting in prayer and exhortation. This meeting opened the way for the formation of a youth's Missionary Society, of which I was President for several years.

While I was thus engaged, I had three singular visions of the night. In the first, I was commanded to have my baptism repeated, and have on the Pastor's gown, in which he baptized me, which was of a broad, dark and white stripe. This dream may seem trifling to some, yet it has had good effect upon my mind, for it has pictured out before me the different scenes of my life, which have been mingled with joy and sorrow. Sometimes I could express myself in the language of the Psalmist "Thou hast made my mountain to stand strong. I shall never be moved," and at other times I have had to say, "Thou didst hide thy face and I was troubled, all thy waves and thy billows have gone over me." The next night, I dreamed that I was commanded to go

to the meeting-house of the First Church to which I belonged, and preach a sermon. I was at once filled with the greatest consternation, and was so much troubled that I fell to weeping, and made use of every argument in my power against it, and that I was no way qualified for such an important work, but I was laid hold of by an invisible hand, and forced on my way, while the tears were gushing from my eyes. When I arrived at the meeting-house and saw the people gathered, my distress was such that I was led to cry out in the extremity of my soul, "Lord, help, for I can not preach," and at once I awoke, much pleased to find it but a dream. Oh, how often I have realized the force of what I felt in this dream, while reflecting upon the importance of preaching to dying sinners the unsearchable riches of Christ! Oh, how often I have had to exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things?"

In the third vision I saw myself clad in the most beautiful garment that I had ever

beheld, it was of a pure white. While I was admiring it, I awoke. While considering this vision, the thought occurred to my mind, might not this robe have had some reference to the righteousness of Christ, that spotless robe prepared for all repenting prodigals like myself? I had been stripped of my filthy, ragged garment, that I had been so long laboring to patch up, in order to make it appear somewhat decent; but I found, after all my toil, that it grew worse and worse, until I was stripped of it, and clothed with the justifying righteousness of my blessed Savior, in whom I stand complete.

Not long after this, the church gave me a partial license to preach among the destitute churches of the Association, as I was still quite young. The circumstance which led to this act of the church was as follows: While I was on a visit in the country about fifty miles distant from home, I was invited to preach; this, as yet, I had

never attempted, and had my scruples as the propriety of accepting the invitation. In ordinary cases I knew it would not be deemed regular. However, being overpersuaded, and thinking the matter would pass off without any further notice, especially as it was in a place where they were not favored with regular preaching, I therefore accepted the invitation. The word was soon spread, and a large congregation assembled. I made the attempt to preach, and I think it was not in vain, as the Lord gave me one soul that night as the first fruit of my labor, whom I have since baptized. Indeed, the meeting seemed to be very interesting to us all, as it did appear that the Lord was in our midst. I left with the expectation that the matter would here drop; but in this I was mistaken, for soon after my return home, the church heard of what had occurred. However, it operated differently from what I had expected; for instead of censure, I received

the approbation of the church ; and at the same time, after having heard me preach before them, they gave me a license to preach, as has already been mentioned. I continued this course until my apprenticeship was ended.

Soon after this I became wedded to Miss Eunice Alston, a member of the same church with myself. After my marriage, I commenced business and was quite successful. Still, my mind was much interested in my ministerial labors. I had been in the habit of preaching in the alms-house one evening in the week ; this exercise afforded me much satisfaction, for while preaching to those poor distressed objects, a scene presented itself, well calculated to awaken sympathy in the mind of a servant of Christ, coming with a message of mercy from the Savior. Misery could here be seen in almost unlimited measure, and almost every form. Here could be seen the sick, the halt, and the blind ; and on many occasions

I was called to stand by the bedside of the dying; sometimes to administer consolation to those who appeared to be truly penitent, by pointing them to a dying Savior, who came into the world to save sinners. In some other cases, I have witnessed the power of religion exemplified in causing the soul to depart in the triumphs of faith. In the course of my ministry at this place, I was sometimes called upon to witness scenes of a far different character from the one last referred to; one of which, of a most heart-rending character, I will here recite.

I was called upon, by the request of a dying man, to come to his bedside; on approaching, I at once recognized him as one with whom I was well acquainted when I was a boy; he being, at that time, a young man; he was of a very respectable family, and had been nursed by a kind-hearted and pious mother, from whom he had received a religious education; but he, being a me-

chanic, like multitudes of others, thought that a frequent dram was indispensable, to keep out the heat in summer, and the cold in winter; not with the intention of becoming a drunkard, but as an act of prudence to preserve health; but alas! he had taken the viper into his bosom, by which the seal of misery and death was stamped upon him, which he soon began to realize, for he gradually sunk from his standing in respectable society, and finally became a most wretched sot, where the hand of charity had found him, and brought him to this asylum, in order to soothe his short but wretched passage to the grave. When I approached this poor man's bedside I found him suffering under all the horrors of a guilty conscience. His awful doom seemed to be presented before him. He knew me, and begged that I would pray for him; which I did, with all my heart. If this poor man could have had a voice as loud as ten thousand thunders, he would have strained it to its ut-

most, in warning the world against listening to the cruel tyrant, who had ruined him, both in soul and body. After praying for him, and pointing him to Christ, the only hope of a dying sinner, I left him, no more to meet him on this side the grave ; I returned home, deeply affected with what I had witnessed.

Necessary attention to business, at this time, prevented my becoming a pastor of a church ; so that my labors were still confined to itinerant preaching, supplying destitute churches both in and out of the city, and officiating in the pulpit of the Pastor when he was sick or absent. Finally the church finding that there were so many calls for the ordinances of the Lord's house to be administered in those churches where I officiated, they appointed a committee to consult with me, as to my willingness to receive ordination. This was quite unexpected to me ; still, as the church thought it advisable, I acceded to their

wishes. The solemnities of the occasion took place on the seventeenth day of January, eighteen hundred and thirteen. This was a very solemn day to me. I still continued my labors among the churches, as I did not intend to settle as a Pastor.

Up to this time we, as a family, had not been taught much in the school of affliction. However, the time had now come that instruction was needful, and our heavenly Father sent the messenger death to communicate to us that needed instruction, by entering, for the first time, our little family circle, and removing from our tender embrace a beloved little son, upon whom our affections were, perhaps, too much placed. The circumstances connected with this bereavement were as singular as they were afflictive. A few days prior to his death, I had left home as a delegate to the Philadelphia Association, and arrived at Camden the evening before the meeting was to take place, and there tarried for the night. After re-

tiring to bed I fell into a sound sleep, at which time I had a remarkable dream, in which I saw my little son, placed before me lifeless, lying in the sleep of death. My mind became much distressed, and I tried to persuade myself that it was but a dream. The more I thought of it, the more I became convinced that it was really the case. When I awoke in the morning, this dream left such a burden upon my mind, that, with all my effort, I could not banish it from my mind, although I knew that I had left him as a picture of health. I went to the meeting, and heard the sermon, but still remained in the same sad state of mind. I felt deeply impressed with a sense of duty to return. After the sermon was ended I left, and on arriving at home I entered the room where my little son was. As soon as I saw him I discovered death in his countenance, and the next morning I beheld him as I had seen him in my vision, sleeping the sleep of death. I never should

have seen him in this world again but for this warning; for there was no telegraph at that day, and the mail slow and uncertain. Not to have seen my child again would have added greatly to my affliction. And not only so, but my presence was greatly needed on such an occasion. I learned by this bereavement a very important lesson of instruction; that although "no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." The Lord is too wise to be mistaken, and, as a kind father, intends that all the afflictions of his people shall work for their good.

Soon after this occurrence, I obtained a patent right for the first cooking stove that had ever been invented. This circumstance had a tendency to increase my business to a considerable degree, and thus to interfere with my ministerial labors. In

order to remedy this evil, I solicited my brother, who was in the same business with myself, to become a partner in the concern. To this he at once acceded, so that I became relieved from the embarrassment under which I had been laboring for some time past. I now entered more fully into my ministerial labors, and doors were opening on every hand for preaching, which I attended to as far as my ability would admit, and in some cases I believe that my labors were not in vain in the Lord. This was evidently the case at Middletown, Rockland County, New York. I labored with this church half of my time about eighteen months, during which time the church was blessed by the addition of many precious souls. These brethren had a great share in my affection, and I doubt not that I should have settled among them, but for my business having confined me to the city, where my attention was occasionally required.

In the course of the year eighteen hundred

and sixteen, I became acquainted with the Rev. Peter Wilson of Hightstown, New Jersey, who gave me an invitation to attend their yearly meeting, on the first Lord's day of August, but on account of previous engagements I could not attend. The next year, however, the invitation being renewed, I made my arrangements to attend, and, accordingly, on the day appointed, I was found among the brethren who were invited to take a part in the meeting, among whom I found a young brother who had been preaching for the church a few times as a candidate for the pastoral office. Consequently, as none of us had come with that intention, we made our arrangements for him to preach on Lord's day morning, as a large congregation was expected to be present at that time. Some of the brethren occupied the pulpit on Saturday, myself closing the meeting with a few remarks; after which, Deacon Thomas Allen gave me an invitation to make his house my home during the meeting, whose kind offer I

accepted. On our way to his home, we entered into a very agreeable conversation upon matters of religion, with which I found him to be well acquainted, and from the knowledge he seemed to have of his Bible, I thought him admirably well qualified as a father in Israel, and I could not wonder that the Church should have selected him as a fit person to fill the office of Deacon. On our arrival I was received with kindness by the family. After supper, we resumed our religious conversation, in the course of which he was somewhat inquisitive as to my situation in life. In reply I gave him to understand that I was in business with my brother, and the most part of my time was occupied in supplying destitute Churches. The conversation being ended, and family devotions attended to, we retired to bed.

On the next morning, being Lord's day, we met our brethren again at the house of God. As was expected, a very large congregation assembled, so that not more than one half of

the people could get into the house. The young brother who was to officiate, appeared to be well qualified for the labors of the day. He made quite a display of talent, both natural and acquired, and it was very perceptible that he had studied the art of elocution to a considerable degree ; and I doubt not that his sermon would have graced the pulpit of a congregation that had become more refined in literature ; but instead of this, his hearers were made up of plain farmers, who were expecting to hear the truth preached, in language simplified to their understanding. If we wish to teach children, we must make use of language suited to their capacity. I have often heard of generals who, when going into battle, charged their men not to aim too high, for in so doing, their ammunition would be wasted. I therefore have come to the conclusion, that a plain style of preaching is the best adapted to the pulpit. A want of this, I think, was what foiled this young man's hope of becoming

the pastor of Hightstown Church. I therefore would advise all young men in the ministry, in preaching Christ crucified, to adapt their style to the comprehension of the most illiterate of their hearers, and no one is so well qualified to do this as a man of learning. Therefore, as in the days of Christ, let the poor have the Gospel preached to them. However, I must now dismiss these remarks, having given them a larger space than I at first intended.

After sermon was concluded, it fell to my lot again to make some further observations, after which the meeting was closed, and I returned with brother Allen. In the course of our conversation that evening, I gave him to understand that I expected to return home the next morning. In reply to this, he said that the leading members of the Church had decided for me to preach the next day, which would close the meeting. This did not accord with my feelings, but being urged by brother Allen, I acceded to their wishes.

After having preached for them the next day, they held a private meeting, at the conclusion of which, they interrogated me in relation to my willingness to accept of a call to become the pastor of the church. This was far from what I anticipated, as I did not come for such a purpose. However, I gave them to understand how I was situated, and that I was in business, and that I was unprepared to give them any encouragement, but as they were destitute, I would visit them again in a few weeks, and accordingly made the appointment.

This act of the church may be thought premature, and doubtless it would have been so, but for the reason that they had received, as they thought, sufficient intelligence from their former pastor, in relation to my standing in the church where I held my membership. After having taken leave of the brethren, I returned home. On my arrival, I understood that my brother's wife had purposed in her mind to visit her parents, who lived

near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, provided I would accompany her. This arrangement, I saw, would clash with my appointment at Hightstown, and by delaying the journey until this should have been fulfilled, would have made it too late in the season to have returned before winter. I, therefore, had to leave the matter for further consideration, until I should see my duty more plain.

CHAPTER IV.

VISIT TO PITTSBURGH AND VICINITY.—SETTLEMENT
AND LABORS WITH THE HIGHTSTOWN BAPTIST
CHURCH.—WONDERFUL ESCAPE.

THE conflict which had occupied my mind, referred to in the close of the preceding chapter, originated from my unwillingness to disappoint my brethren at Hightstown, although I did not feel disposed to accept of the pastoral office of any church, for I had often witnessed the difficulty attending that charge ; and at the same time I had a strong impulse to accede to my brother's wife's wishes, as this would afford me a favorable opportunity to visit my brethren in what was, at that time, termed the far west. I finally decided to go, and accordingly we set out on our journey, passing through Hightstown, and calling upon brother Allen, in order to communicate to him a statement of the case ; who, after hav-

ing heard how the matter stood, seemed to be disappointed ; yet did not censure me for the course I had taken, and offered to get the pulpit supplied until my return. This was altogether different from my expectation, for I had thought that my having to be so long absent, would have put an end to any thing further in relation to this matter. However, I thought the Lord might send some one among the brethren who should visit them in my absence, who might receive the approbation of the church, and receive a call to the pastoral office.

Under these impressions, I took my leave of brother Allen, resting the whole matter in the hands of God, whose wisdom can not err, in bringing about all events for our good and his own glory, and proceeded on our journey ; and after the lapse of ten days, we arrived at our place of destination. I soon found a large field opened before me, already white for the harvest, and the laborers but few, so that I saw that my work was

laid out before me, together with the means necessary to facilitate that work, without which it could not have been accomplished. The hand of the Lord must have been in the matter, for I soon found a warm-hearted brother, who had horses at his command, and was well acquainted with the people and country, to a great distance round, who offered his services to become my guide and companion, on a missionary tour to this destitute region. This offer was received with grateful feelings, and accordingly, we set out upon the field of our labor, and I am inclined to think that it was under the guidance of a Divine providence, for it proved both pleasing and profitable to us, and I think, a blessing to those among whom we traveled. The people received us, in every case, with a joyful welcome, while I preached to them the great salvation, proclaimed in the gospel; and I can not doubt that many serious and lasting impressions were made. After preaching, we

sung and prayed until a late hour of the night. Our meetings were always crowded.

If I had kept a diary, it would have furnished me with some interesting incidents which occurred during this tour, of a most pleasing character, and might have found a place here, to some advantage. One of these incidents is still fresh in my memory, and I shall refer to it, as I pass on. On one occasion, we called at a public house, and gave the landlord to understand the object of our tour. We were received and treated kindly, and invited to preach at his house that evening, to which I consented. The invitation was at once circulated, and in the evening a very large assembly came together; and judging by my feelings, and the serious impressions that seemed to be made upon the minds of the hearers, the great day will tell that some good was done that evening. The next day, we set out to the place of our next appointment, about ten miles distant.

After having passed on our way a few miles, on looking back we saw a young man on horseback, a few hundred yards distant, who appeared to be in deep meditation. My brother remarked to me, that he was under the impression that the young man had been to the meeting the night before, and had received some serious convictions, which were now resting upon his mind. I replied that these were my impressions. He kept himself at the same distance, to the place of meeting. On our arrival, he mingled with the crowd, so that I heard no more of him until my return home.

This meeting was the most interesting of any that we had had. The house was large and every part crowded. Many of the people had come from a great distance. This was a very happy meeting to me, and I found great liberty in preaching. After the sermon was ended, the brethren continued the meeting through the night, in singing, praying, and exhorting, being too dark to re-

turn home. Our meetings were becoming more and more interesting. On Lord's days I preached in meeting-houses. These houses were of quite rude construction, both in their workmanship and materials. They were built with logs, plastered with clay, and the doors and windows cut out of the logs. The seats were of rough slabs, placed on logs. The pulpit was a platform, raised about two feet from the floor, constructed after the same manner, and having a crotch placed at each end, with a slab across to rest the Bible on. However, I believe that these buildings, though of such rough construction, have been often graced with the Divine presence ; for I am confident that I can witness to the truth of this, for I never preached to more attentive and solemn congregations, for every eye was fixed, and every heart seemed to be open, for the reception of the word of life. As for myself, I think that I never felt more of the power of religion in my soul, than while preaching in

those rude houses. However, these ancient structures have been giving way for a more modern style of architecture; and the whole face of the country is becoming changed from its former appearance.

After having been traveling and preaching near three months, I took my leave of the brethren, and set out for home. On my arrival, I found that the church at Hightstown had been waiting for me, consequently I felt it my duty to visit them again; and in a few days, I was found again in their pulpit, and after having preached, they tendered to me a unanimous call to become their pastor, with the understanding that I was to supply them occasionally during the winter. Having had this matter under serious consideration, while viewing the hand of Providence in opening this door, I did not dare say nay, but at once accepted the call.

After having made my arrangements to supply them, I took leave for home, and

on my arriving, I received four letters; one from Doctor Estep, one of the most popular and useful preachers of the region of country that I had so recently visited. This letter contained a call, under the direction of one of the churches. However, my recent engagements with the church at Hightstown put an end to this matter. I have learned that the Doctor has, within a few months past, been called home to receive the reward of his labor, being far advanced in years.

I received a very interesting letter from one of the Doctor's students, of the Medical department. This young man was awakened under my preaching. He gave me to understand that he had been reduced almost to a state of despair, but finally found the Savior, to the joy of his soul. I received another letter, from the young man to whom I have already referred, as having been awakened at the public house, and who followed on to my next appointment. The language of this letter was most ex-

pressive of the deep, pungent conviction which he had felt in his soul, that he had been such a great sinner, but that after a hard struggle he had found peace of mind, in the dying, risen Jesus, who came into the world to save sinners. I understood, soon after, that this young man had become a member of the church, and had been sent forth to preach the gospel.

The other letter was from a young married man whose case was most remarkable ; he had given up all for lost, and dared not pray any longer. In this sad state of mind, he sat down and wrote this letter, in which he gave me a detail of the great conflict he had felt in his mind, while viewing the lost state of his soul, and that now he was despairing of ever receiving any consolation. As he was about folding up his letter, a thought occurred to his mind that God might have mercy in store for him, although he was a great sinner. While under these impressions, he at once retired to the woods,

and fell down upon his knees, and like Jacob of old, wrestled with God in fervent prayer, until he obtained the blessing. He arose from his knees, and returned home with his soul full of glory, rejoicing in the Savior. He sat down, and added to his letter, the wonderful change he had experienced. His load of sin and guilt fell off. He now understood what the Savior meant, by being born again, and what it is to be made "a new creature in Christ Jesus."

Oh the love of that dear Savior! how it makes the soul rejoice. It can calm the troubled ocean of the mind, when it hears his powerful voice. Oh what a satisfaction it is to a servant of Christ, when he is made the means of restoring a poor prodigal to his Father's house, and to feast upon the provision furnished by the dying groans of the blessed Savior, who gave his life to save the vilest of sinners. The contrast between the former and the latter part of this letter was wonderful.

I shall now return to my narrative, in relation to my connection with the church at Hightstown. After having supplied this church occasionally through the winter, I moved my family among them during the month of April, eighteen hundred and eighteen, and on the first Lord's day in May, I assumed the pastoral charge of the church. I was happy in finding that this church was greatly blessed with good deacons, they being men of exemplary piety, and always working in harmony with each other. They were honest, open-hearted men, and never sought to impose upon the church the plans which they might have adopted, without a hearty approval of the church. Their names were as follows: Thomas Allen, Wilson Hunt, and Enoch Chamberlin. These brethren after having served the church a great number of years, had, at the time of writing this narrative, gone home; they had ceased from their labor and their work did follow them. From the time of my enter-

ing upon my charge, we had a gradual increase, both of the church and the congregation, more especially of the latter, and the church was much united.

After the lapse of two years, death entered, the second time, into our family circle, and removed from me the bride of my youth. She had long participated with me in my joys and sorrows. The evening before her death, in our family devotion, she requested to line the hymn that she had selected as being well adapted to the state of her mind, having no hope but in the death of Christ; and although she had always been destitute of a voice for singing, yet on this occasion, she sung with a strong and clear voice. After our devotions were ended, she lay comfortable, until near the approach of morning, at which time, we were summoned to her bedside, to take our leave of her immortal spirit, which in a few moments, took its departure to God who gave it. She had been long in a poor

state of health, yet her death was sudden and unexpected. By this bereavement, I was left with five small motherless children. This affliction can not be fully estimated by any but those who have had the experience. The funeral solemnities were attended by a large concourse of people. The Rev. Mr. Elliot delivered the sermon, and the Rev. Mr. Henry, of Cranbery, closed the meeting. After this, nothing of a special nature occurred in the church, until the fourth of September, eighteen hundred and twenty-three; at which time we sustained a great loss of one of our deacons, our beloved brother, Wilson Hunt. The death of this amiable man I felt most sensibly, for in him I lost a kind and affectionate friend, whose house was to me like that of a father; and his loss to the church could hardly be estimated, for in it, she lost one of her strong pillars, for he was always active in the cause of Christ. He possessed the means, and was not wanting in will, to promote

the interest of the church. He finished his course with joy, at the age of sixty years. Although he is dead, yet he still lives in the hearts of his brethren, and with him who said "because I live ye shall live also."

At about this time, the church at Nottingham Square, being destitute of a pastor, gave me a call to supply them one half of the time. This church was located some nine miles from Hightstown. After having obtained the approbation of my brethren, I acceded to their wishes, and entered upon my labors. This opened a wide door for usefulness, still it increased my labor considerably. A little prior to this, I had become wedded to a daughter of deacon Thomas Allen, who proved to be an excellent consort in the way to heaven, and a kind mother to my children.

We have now to record the death of the Rev. Peter Wilson, my predecessor, who was the second pastor of this church, and continued his official relation for the term

of twenty-eight years. He finished his course May the fourteenth, eighteen hundred and twenty-four, being at the time of his death seventy-two years old. This brother, in the morning of his life, was one of the most successful ministers of the Baptist order in the State of New Jersey; and although his afternoon was somewhat cloudy, yet we hope to meet him in that better world, where all the clouds and darkness of imperfection shall be lost in the blissful sunshine of an eternal day. Let us who are still in this world of sin, receive a caution from the Book of God, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Two years subsequent, the fields of my labor began to ripen for harvest, at which time I found the fulfillment of a blessed promise that "he that soweth in tears shall reap in joy." I had long been weeping and praying over the people, and sometimes under the greatest discouragements, but now the time had come to favor Zion, and I

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saw that I had not been laboring in vain. My Master armed me with courage, and I entered into the work with all my heart ; the Lord blessing my labors, so that a large harvest of souls was gathered into his garner. During this revival, which lasted some considerable time, I think that over a hundred and fifty were added to the churches. This work gave every indication of its being of God ; there having been no special efforts made use of, and if my memory is correct, there was not a Lord's day passed, during this revival, but the ordinance of baptism was administered ; and many of those who were gathered in at that time, are now the pillars of these churches, although many of them are gone to be sanctified in heaven. The churches were very particular in the examination of their candidates, as to the reason of the hope within them. Near the close of this revival, I received a call from the church in Southampton, Pennsylvania. I had preached for

them several times, after the death of their pastor, as a supply. This circumstance opened a door to the course which the church pursued in this matter. The propositions were every way satisfactory; indeed they were far more inviting, in relation to worldly comforts, than where I was then settled. However, when I began to think the matter over, I found that my tender feelings, being like that of a father to his children, began to preponderate in favor of my remaining with my brethren with whom I had lived in the greatest harmony and friendship; and at the same time, they were much opposed to my leaving them. After due consideration I gave the church at Southampton to understand how matters stood in relation to my leaving my charge, in which I had so long remained happy, and that I felt it my duty to decline accepting their call. However, from some circumstances which have occurred since that time, I have had a query arising in my mind,

whether I had not let my tender feelings lead me astray in this matter.

Soon after this, an event occurred which furnished me with a very striking evidence of the power of faith. My wife had become reduced so low in health, that her physician gave up all hope of her recovery. By my request, he called in one of the most noted consulting physicians. After having concluded their consultations, they called me out of the room, in order to communicate to me their decision, which was that she could not survive the night. I felt very much afflicted in mind, on hearing the sad tidings ; I was confident that although the help of man had failed, yet there was nothing too hard for the Lord to do ; I retired into a secret place, and there poured out my soul in prayer to God ; and I think that I felt, on that occasion, the same divine impulse that Jacob did when he wrestled with God. My faith was so strong, that I felt an assurance that my wife would recover her usual health. On returning to

the room where my wife lay, on approaching her bed, I told her what I had felt; she replied that she had experienced the same feeling; and from that time she began to recover, and was soon restored to her usual health. Her physician called the next morning, with the expectation of finding her a corpse; but instead of this, he found her fast recovering. The above may appear to some rather fanciful. However, I believe that God can have a free access to the mind of any individual, so as to influence him to the act of fervent prayer, through which he receives the blessings that God has promised. This the Bible confirms, beyond a doubt.

At about this time, the church had become greatly increased both in members and congregation; many of whom were persons of wealth. This led the way for the minds of the people to become agitated in reference to the building of a new meeting-house. So that, in the year eighteen hundred and thirty-four, they had a new brick building dedicated

to the service of God. A short time before this, I had resigned my charge at the Square Church, as they were now in circumstances to support a pastor. I have always felt strongly attached to this church ever since my first acquaintance with them, and have ever felt a very great pleasure in preaching for them occasionally.

In eighteen hundred and thirty-six I resigned my charge of the Hightstown Church, after having been their pastor for the term of eighteen years. However, by the request of the church, I continued to supply them three months longer, and then took an affectionate leave of my brethren, with whom I and my family had for so many years mingled our joys and sorrows. I left them with the satisfaction that my labors had not been in vain in the Lord.

I will here record a wonderful escape that I experienced, soon after I commenced my ministerial labors, in which I was providentially saved from a most painful death. I had

been preaching at Washington, South River ; on my return, by way of New Brunswick, I took passage on board of the first steamboat that plied between that place and New York. While passing Amboy, the passengers, amounting to about sixty, being all in the cabin, at this moment a pleasure boat passed us, having on board a band of music. At this juncture, they struck up a tune, and at once a rush was made for the deck, myself being the last to ascend the stairs, having placed one foot on the deck, the boiler exploded and tore away the stairs, that my other foot had, at that instant, left. We all ran to the stern of the boat, and fell down and held our faces over to get our breath, the steam being so suffocating. As soon as the steam had passed away, we proceeded to the bow of the boat, where an appalling sight presented itself to our view ; a man had been brought up out of the bow cabin, and while they were in the act of stripping him, his skin adhered to his clothes. This poor sufferer

lingered upon the shores of mortality in the most dreadful agony about two hours, and then took his leave of the world. No pen can describe the suffering of this poor man, and we all escaped the same horrid death, as within a hair's breadth. I have often recalled this occurrence to mind, but not without tender feelings of gratitude to God, who has been my preserver, not only in this but in many other cases. Indeed, I see enough daily to excite my grateful feelings.

CHAPTER V.

LABORS AT JAMAICA, LAMBERTSVILLE, AND ELSEWHERE.—CLOSE OF THE NARRATIVE.

AFTER having taken my leave of the brethren at Hightstown, I returned to the city of New York, with the expectation of spending the remainder of my days in occasional preaching. I was not long in the city, before I was called upon to supply destitute churches, and among the rest, the church at Jamaica, Long Island. This little church had just sprung up, having but a few members, and holding their meetings in a school-house. I had preached for them but a few times, before I began to discover some things of a very hopeful appearance. The congregation increased, and serious impressions were made upon the minds of many. The brethren invited me to move among them, and take the charge of this little branch ; and on becoming convinced that duty dictated such a course, I accepted

their invitation, and was soon settled among them. The congregation continued to increase, until the school-house became crowded to overflowing.

The brethren seeing the prospect so pleasing, soon set about erecting a new meeting-house, and in a short time we had a neat little house dedicated to the service of God. The dedication sermon was preached by the Rev. Doctor Dowling of New York, on the 8th of April, 1838. The congregation continued to increase, and a number were baptized and added to the church. After having labored for this church near two years, a circumstance occurred that put an end to my further prospects. The leading members of the church, together with their families, twenty-eight in number, left for the far West.

The church at Lambertsville, New Jersey, having heard that I was about resigning my charge, gave me a call to become their pastor. Although it had been my wish to be freed from the charge of a church, yet through

the persuasion of friends, I accepted the call, and settled among them. During my stay with these brethren I was very happy, and I believed that my labors were not in vain in the Lord ; however, it seemed not to be the will of my Master that I should make a protracted stay in this place, on account of the ill-health of my wife, who had caught a heavy cold, from the dampness of the house in which we had been living. She, however, was restored in some measure, so far as to be about house, but it was finally discovered that her mental powers had received such a shock, that she was rendered incapable of attending to her family concerns. These afflictive circumstances led her parents and friends to advise her being removed to Hightstown. This being concluded upon, the scene of my short stay with this church, having been something less than two years, I took my leave of these brethren, with a warm feeling for their prosperity, and I believe that the same feeling was reciprocated by them.

I now became resolved never to take charge of a church again, but to confine my labors to occasional preaching. This is the course I have pursued ever since. My wife lived several years after this, but did not recover her right mind, until a few months prior to her death. She was fully prepared for the messenger when he came, and I have no doubt but she made a happy exchange. I am now living with my third wife, Mary, daughter of Mr. William D. Jewell.

In eighteen hundred and fifty-seven, death again entered, and made another call in the removal of my youngest daughter, Mary Fielder, leaving four children, three sons and a daughter, to mourn her loss. I have written the following lines upon her death as expressive of the deep feelings of my heart.

“Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord!”

O dear Mary, thou hast left us !
Death has seized thee as his prey ;
Laid thee in the grave's dark dungeon,
Till the resurrection day.

But thy soul has now ascended,
To thy Savior's lovely arms ;
There with him to live forever ;
O he hath ten thousand charms !

O dear Mary, how we loved thee !
O how hard it was to part !
O to brake those cords asunder,
That did bind us, one in heart !

But I hope again to meet thee,
In that better world above ;
There, to join the saints in heaven,
In the song, redeeming love.

Yes, dear Mary, I will meet thee
When my toils on earth shall cease ;
Yes, we'll meet our blessed Savior,
In that world of joy and peace.

O, thy dying groans, dear Mary,
Melted down thy Father's heart ;
When no mortal arm could save thee,
Death decreed that we must part.

But dear Mary, I will meet thee,
On the banks of Canaan's shore ;
There to dwell with Christ forever,
There to meet and part no more.

I am now coming to the close of my narrative, which brings me to the advanced age of seventy-seven years. Sixty years of this

time, I have been a professor of religion, and fifty-four years, a preacher of the Gospel. It has been my wish to bring my thoughts, words, and actions to accord with my Bible ; but alas ! after all, I find that I have come far short of my duty, and can say, in truth, that I have been an unprofitable servant ; and I regret that I have not been more faithful to my Master's service ; but he knows his people's weakness and imperfections, which render the Christian, at times, almost unable to endure the conflict, in which he is engaged, with the combined powers of darkness. This led the Apostle to exclaim, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" but he soon found a remedy for the malady, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." This is the only hope of the Christian in life and in death. The Christian may here rest, as upon a solid rock.

And now, O my Father ! as I must soon take my leave of the church and the world,

may I safely pass the gloomy valley of death,
may thy rod and thy staff comfort me, and
may my path be lighted, by the breaking
forth of the sun of righteousness, that I may
be guided safely to my heavenly home !

MY HEAVENLY HOME ANTICIPATED.

Sweet home, sweet home, my heavenly home,
Where I shall be at rest !
Sweet home, where I shall see my Lord,
Sweet home of all the blest !

Now while my pen moves swiftly on,
I feel a heaven below ;
I'm thinking of my heavenly home,
Where I shall shortly go.

Sweet home, to dwell where Jesus is,
Where all the saints shall meet,
And with one heart and voice proclaim,
The bliss to be complete !

This world, this world is not my home,
I have no portion here ;
I am a pilgrim here below,
My home will soon appear.

Sweet home, sweet home, where all the saints
Sing with melodious sound ;
And not a jarring note is heard
Through all the regions round !

As saints go up from earth to heaven,
They join the heavenly choir ;
The song of Jesus' dying love
Doth every heart inspire.

No mortal can describe the joy
Of that bright world above,
Where saints and angels join in one,
And all their song is love.

O the delight, the heavenly joy,
The glory of that place,
Where we shall meet our blessed Lord,
And see him face to face !

If a few drops while here below,
Can so transport the soul ;
What will it be, when we get home,
Where streams in torrents roll ?

Shall this poor sinful soul of mine
There see my Savior's face ?
Wash'd from my sins in his own blood ;
This will be wondrous grace.

MY CONVERSION IN VERSE.

Let those who love the Savior's name,
Now listen while I tell,
How my poor soul was saved from death,
While near the gates of hell.

When at the age of seventeen years,
All which I'd spent in sin,
The spirit gave me light divine
To see how vile I'd been.

'Twas on a night when I did hear
A man blaspheme God's name,
The oath struck terror to my soul
So dreadfully profane.

O what a wretch, I thought, was he,
Who could his God defy ;
Why was he not at once struck dead,
With vengeance from on high ?

But soon I turned my eyes within ;
O what did I there see ?
I saw that in the sight of God,
I was as vile as he.

Then, up to heaven I lift my eyes,
And horror fill'd my soul ;
For Sinai's mount was all on fire,
I heard loud thunders roll.

I saw the justice of my doom,
Should I be sent to hell ;
I would pronounce the sentence just,
That doomed me there to dwell.

My sins that I had long forgot,
Like mountains now did rise ;
They call'd for vengeance on my soul,
Their voice did reach the skies.

My guilt appeared to me so great,
I thought I dare not pray ;
But O, my burden was so great,
I could not stay away.

I read my Bible, while my eyes
Did overflow with tears ;
But not a word could I there find,
But to increase my fears.

I read of Jesus on the cross ;
For sinners he did die ;
O can, O can it be for me,
For one so vile as I ?

Ten tedious days I spent in prayer,
No comfort could I see ;
I thought that now my doom was sure,
No hope was left for me.

But yet, the joyful morning came,
That shone with beams so bright,
That turned my mourning into joy,
My darkness into light.

My Savior's words, while on the mount,
With force came to my mind ;
" Blessed are they that mourn," he said,
" For they shall comfort find."

No mortal can describe the joy,
The rapture and delight ;
I thought, had I an Angel's wings,
To heaven I'd take my flight.

O how I loved my blessed Lord !
I clasped him in my arms,
I saw, at once, he did possess,
More than ten thousand charms.

O what a change my soul then felt !
I, who was so undone,
Now in my Savior's righteousness,
More spotless than the sun.

Old things, with me, had passed away,
I felt that all was new ;
New joys, new comfort in my soul,
For heaven was brought to view.

New scenes of wonder and delight,
Where'er I cast my eyes ;
I saw them in the world below,
I saw them in the skies.

I saw them in the house of God,
For 'twas a heaven below ;
I saw them in his lovely saints,
And I with them did go.

I went rejoicing on my way,
And told to sinners round,
That Jesus came to seek and save ;
O what a joyful sound !

I followed now my blessed Lord,
In his delightful way ;
O may I ever walk therein,
And never, never stray !

Dear Savior, be my constant guide,
And be thou always nigh ;
Be with me while I live below,
Be with me when I die.

And when I lose my mortal breath,
And all my powers shall fail,
May I, by faith, then conquer death,
And in thy strength prevail.

Then when my flesh shall lay interred,
And there in hope shall rest,
O, may my soul then dwell with thee,
And be forever blest !

In heaven delighted there to see,
Those lovely saints of old,
Of whom the Bible speaks so much,
Such wonders have been told.

Some who may see and read these lines,
May think I am insane ;
While others read, they understand,
For they have felt the same.

So Festus thought that Paul was mad,
For he could not conceive
How such strange things as Paul declared,
A sane mind would believe.

And Nicodemus, though so wise,
Yet he could not explain,
What was the meaning of our Lord,
By being born again.

This is religion from above,
Divine in every part ;
It stamps the image of the Lord,
Upon the sinner's heart.

The heart by grace now formed anew,
Good fruit must soon appear ;
Our lives devoted to the Lord,
Flow from a heart sincere.

The Spirit's quick'ning power can change
From hatred into love ;
Can turn the lion to a lamb,
The vulture to a dove.

How many talk of this great change,
Yet still they thoughtless go ;
Trust in their righteousness to save,
Though all an outward show.

What multitudes pursue this course,
And think it will avail ;
This has been tried in every age,
And always found to fail.

O may thy servants faithful prove!
The gospel loud proclaim,
To those who still are dead in sin,
They must be born again.

I'll pray for Zion while I live,
With her I love to meet,
For there my blessed Lord comes down,
To make our meetings sweet.

My seventy-seventh year now has past,
My old companions fled ;
They gave to me the parting hand,
To rest among the dead.

Now, I must stay my father's time,
I can not long remain ;
If I get home to heaven at last,
Then dying will be gain.

END OF THE NARRATIVE.

CHAPTER VI.

WORDS OF COMFORT FOR THE AFFLICTED.

ON taking a retrospective view of a long and protracted life spent as a professor and minister of Christ, in which I have found a most clear exemplification of what our Lord said to his disciples, "In the world ye shall have tribulation ;" although I have not had the experience that some have had, of the difficulties attendant on a professional life in the cause of Christ, yet I think that my knowledge has extended so far, as to lead me to feel a deep sympathy for those of the people of God who are afflicted. From these considerations, I purpose to write a short chapter, in which it may be, that some remarks may be made, calculated, in some measure, to soothe the sorrows of an afflicted mind ; yet this will depend upon God, who alone can make the remarks prove beneficial.

Afflictions, my brethren, are the common

lot of all ; so Job says, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward." These afflictions are of a penal character, and are the offspring of a sinful and corrupt heart, which we bring into the world with us, and into which the seeds of misery have been incorporated ; and although man comes forth like a flower, unfolding its beauty, yet he bears, in his own nature, the impress of mortality. Now although afflictions are not removed from the children of God, still they no longer remain as a penal evil, or as an expression of vindictive wrath, but as a fatherly chastisement ; hence Paul says, "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth. But if ye are without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons." So that it is the will of the Lord, that these afflictions should not be removed. Paul speaks of an affliction given him, one of a very grievous nature, compared to a

piercing thorn in the flesh, “a messenger of Satan to buffet him.” He sought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from him; yet his prayers could not be answered, for God saw that to remove this affliction would prove very injurious to Paul; for it was found among the “all things” which were to work for his good. This affliction was to serve as a preventive to his becoming “exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations given to him.” But God gave him that which was to answer a far more valuable purpose; “my grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness;” so that the Lord bestowed more than what was equivalent to the removal of the affliction. Praying is not in vain, after all.

The children of God, sometimes, are ready to conclude that their being afflicted is an evidence against them, and thus they write bitter things against themselves, and are ready to exclaim—“can it be that a

child of God can be so much afflicted?" But stop, my afflicted brother or sister, are you in the constant habit of reading your Bible? If so, you must have overlooked what Peter says in relation to this matter. Hark! and I will read it for you. "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trials, which are to try you, as though some strange thing had happened unto you. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also, with exceeding joy." By becoming acquainted with the Bible, we soon discover that afflictions have been the common lot of all God's people, in every age of the world. In the dealings of God, in the afflictions of his people, he does not act as we sometimes do, haphazard; but he always acts in reference to some very important end. He is too wise to err, and too good to be unkind.

We may think it strange, that God should have led the children of Israel through such

a roundabout way,—a difficult and dangerous way;—and yet, it was the *right* way, and any other way, no doubt, would have proved fatal. In this way, they saw a rich display of the wisdom and power of God, at the Red Sea. Indeed, throughout the whole journey of the Jews, from Egypt to Canaan, is most strikingly symbolized the Christian's experience, from the time of his conversion to the faith of the Gospel, until he is taken to heaven. Although Israel saw so many signal displays of the goodness and power of God, in delivering them from their bondage in Egypt; dividing the waters of the Red Sea; forming a cloud, resembling a pillar, to pass between them and their enemies; this pillar being a bright light to Israel, but to the Egyptians darkness and confusion that caused their destruction, the waters closing in upon them, while Israel was found on the opposite bank, singing a song of praise to God for their great deliverance.

Notwithstanding all that they had seen of the wonderful display of Divine goodness, and so fully expressed in their song of praise, yet they had passed but three days' journey in the wilderness, before they began to murmur against Moses and Aaron; and on every trivial occasion, the same ingratitude was manifested, against God, their kind benefactor, who had done such great things for them. If they could have understood the end that God intended should be accomplished by their afflictions, and the manner in which they were to be delivered, it would have put an end to their murmuring. But we must perceive that all these murmurings were the offspring of unbelief; a want of a full confidence in the veracity of God's word, which was delivered to them by Moses; and at the same time, they had been favored with abundant evidence to confirm their faith in the goodness, faithfulness, wisdom, and power of God, to fulfill every promise he had made,

by the mouth of Moses. This was their great sin, that they had rejected all those evidences, which their own eyes had witnessed, in the plagues sent upon the Egyptians, and their destruction in the Red Sea. They had witnessed also, their own deliverance from their enemies. They also had the pillar of cloud by day, to shelter them from the scorching sun, and by night to lighten their camp. All these were striking evidences, that God would accomplish every gracious promise, in reference to his people, and that all their afflictions must work together for their good, for "tribulation worketh patience, and patience, experience, and experience, hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us."

However, I think that it is a very common thing, for Christians to magnify their afflictions. In this case, it might be profitable for us, to examine the experience of

some of those holy men of God, recorded in the Bible. This, perhaps, may have a tendency to give us a more correct estimate, as to the magnitude of our own afflictions. The first case that I shall refer to, is that of Job, in whom we see a very striking example of the power of faith. From the description which God has given of Job in his word, he must have been a very pious man. He styles him "his servant, a perfect and upright man." However, we are not to understand, by this phraseology, that Job had arrived to a state of sinless perfection, for there is not a man that liveth and sinneth not. That state of perfect holiness is only attainable in that glorified state, where the just are made perfect in heaven. There are two ways in which this phrase is made use of in the Bible, in reference to the people of God, while in their present state of imperfection.

The first that I shall name is that which they receive by their union with Christ, as

their head and representative, being made perfect in him, not having on their own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness which is by faith in Jesus Christ. In this, they will stand justified before the throne, at the last day. The second case is a comparative perfection, which arises from those holy principles implanted in the soul, in the work of regeneration. These heavenly principles so operate, both upon the mind and actions of men, as to bring them into a sweet conformity to the will of God. Still, the seeds of sin are so deeply rooted in our natures, that sin can not be fully and finally eradicated, until the soul, like the pure grain, separated from its chaff and noxious weeds, shall be gathered into the heavenly garner of the Lord. Until this is the case, it becomes all-important that the Christian make use of every precaution, lest the weeds of sin be permitted to overgrow those heavenly plants of grace, and thus prevent the unfolding of their beauty to the eye of a gazing world.

Now, as to the perfection which God ascribes to Job, no more seems to be intended than that he was eminently pious, above all in his day. This I think, must appear obvious from what the Lord said, "Satan, hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God, and that escheweth evil?" Job was a very fit subject for Satan to try his skill upon,—not only a pious man, but a great man,—and of such wisdom, that his counsel was sought after by many of his day, and confided in, as being perfectly safe. He also abounded in wealth, and had a large family of children, to share with him in his riches. But alas, for poor Job! for Satan hated and envied him, on account of his happiness and prosperity, and at once devised a plan for his destruction, by one dreadful crash. One servant after another approached him, with the sad tidings that the fire, the sword, and tempest, had reduced him to poverty, and had rendered him childless.

Now, my afflicted brother, what think you of the afflictions of this faithful servant of God? How often you have been writing bitter things against yourself, and thinking that you could not be a child of God ; for if so, you would not have had to suffer so many weighty afflictions. Are you disposed to bring them forward, and place them in the balance with Job's? If you are thus disposed, it may afford you great relief, for you will find that his afflictions were so ponderous, that yours would appear like the dust of the balance, and at once cease to be a burden. But let us examine the subject a little further, and see how these afflictions operated upon the mind of Job. They had a tendency to humble him in the dust. He fell upon the ground, and worshiped, and said, "naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither ; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord." Here we see, that Satan found, that Job's faith was more than a match for his diabolical purpose.

Job's faith was much stronger than Satan had anticipated, for "in all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." He gained the conquest, by faith in his living Redeemer. O blessed religion of the Bible! what canst thou not do in sustaining the heirs of salvation, though stripped of all earthly comforts, and canst even cause them to sing, while burning at the stake. The well of living water within the Christian, is too deep to be drained by all the powers of darkness combined together; it must and will continue to spring up into everlasting life. The afflictions of Job do not appear to be so much intended as a fatherly correction, as for the trial of his faith, which, being much more precious than gold, it being intended to confirm the faith of the afflicted in after ages; and it would be well for us, my afflicted brother, to receive a lesson of instruction from the sentiments, to which Job gave utterance, and seek to cultivate the same temper of mind; it being highly commendable, and

will be sure to meet with the approbation of heaven.

Let us further remark, that although Satan met with such a powerful repulse, in his first attack upon Job, yet he did not appear to be satisfied with one attempt to destroy Job's faith ; but gets permission to make another trial, with the restriction, that his life was to be secured. Satan now pursues a plan of which, he expressed himself in the most positive terms, that it would be successful. Poor Job was about to receive another blast from the terrible one, for Satan smote him with sores, from the sole of his foot to his crown ; still he was not heard to murmur against God. Satan now, no doubt, began to feel fearful, that he was about to be foiled in this, his second attempt ; he now solicits the aid of Job's wife, in hope that she might, by her influence, succeed in producing the effect which, he had declared would be the result, in case that the Lord should afflict Job, in his flesh and his bones. This plan of Satan, like

the former, proved abortive, for when Job's wife said to her husband, "curse God, and die," he at once reproved her, by saying, "thou speakest as one of the foolish women speakest. What, shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this Job sinned not with his lips." Here Job gains another triumph over the powers of darkness.

Let us now, for a moment, notice the temper of mind manifested by Job, throughout the heaviest of his afflictions. It is not to be considered entire submission to the will of God, but it amounts to the highest degree of resignation, and it justifies God, in all that he had done. This duty is one of the most important, and most difficult, that faith is called upon to perform. Not that this duty is hard to be understood, for a person of but a limited knowledge, may comprehend the meaning of this duty, but the difficulty lays in reducing it to practice, on account of the repugnance which nature feels, to all descrip-

tion of sufferings. But Job's faith was all-powerful, acting upon the impulse of the soul, overcoming every opposition of the natural disposition, which may be brought to bear, against the will of God. This is the faith that has its origin from heaven, works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world ; it gives confidence to the Christian, hence says Job, " though he slay me yet will I trust in him."

The apostle Paul tells us that " no affliction,"—whether it be intended as chastening or for the trial of our faith,—" is, for the present, joyous but grievous, yet afterward it worketh the peaceable fruits of righteousness, to them that are exercised thereby ;" consequently, we must perceive, that afflictions are not to be so much dreaded, after all ; for they must all, in the end, work for good to those who love God. Hence, says Job, " when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." God will not keep us any longer in the crucible, than is really needful to remove those

imperfections, which might prove injurious to us as Christians. I have looked upon affliction as a high school, in which we are taught some of the higher branches of our religious education. Our Father is not satisfied that his children's knowledge should remain limited to the elementary part of their studies, but intends they should advance until they may become so far proficient, as to become teachers in Israel.

In this school, Job was instructed in some of the most important principles of divine knowledge. What he had learned prior to his entering this school, was correct, so far as he had advanced ; but when his mind began to expand, he saw the Holy one in a light, in which he had never seen him before ; for says he, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." The Lord had made such a wonderful display of his glory to Job, during his affliction, and light had been so clearly diffused

into his mind, that his hearing of God was exchanged to seeing him ; that is, he had received a more full discovery of the glorious attributes of the Deity reflecting clear light into his mind, and opening to his view the total depravity of human nature ; and this led him to abhor himself, and repent in dust and ashes. The same is felt by every pious soul.

This is what caused Paul to exclaim, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” There is nothing short of the blood of Christ, Job’s living Redeemer, that can cleanse us from this pollution of sin. If we wish our bitter cup of affliction made sweet, we must apply to our divine Master for the consolation of the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to apply the consoling promises of the Gospel. This can so change the waters of Marah, as to cause them to become sweet and palatable to the taste, so that we can say with the Apostle, that “our light affliction which is but for a moment,

worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Here we see, that faith and patience are made to triumph, because they look "not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, and which are eternal." But how are the afflictions of the saints rendered light? First, by comprehending fully the important end to be answered by them. Job had acquired some knowledge of this matter, when he expressed his views, in relation to this matter; for he says, "when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." He saw that his afflictions were not intended for his destruction, but to prepare him to receive some of the richest blessings of heaven; for we are told, that "the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning," he having greatly increased in riches, and the same number of children given him; and he lived to see his children's children, to the fourth generation; and being old and full of days, he died, being well prepared to be num-

bered among those, of whom it is said, “these are they that came out of great tribulation and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

We now pass to our second remark, to show how afflictions, so ponderous in their native character, can become light. This may be accomplished by the invisible agency of the Spirit, sustaining both body and mind, so as to render us strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. In this case, a heavy burden becomes light. Let God but speak to the poor weak Christian, borne down with the trials of life, as he did to Paul, “my grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in thy weakness ;” and this is all that is needed, to make the burden light. Nevertheless, there is another consideration, that renders our afflictions light ; they being of so short a duration, compared to a moment. A man may bear up under a very heavy load for a short time, without much difficulty ; but if it should continue for a long

time, he would sink under it ; but our afflictions are compared to a moment, which will soon pass away, so that we can bear them with ease, and should not murmur, but exercise patience ; for life will soon pass away like a shadow. Then, the glory of heaven will be revealed to the wondering soul, like a bird let out of the cage, and flying at large, to behold that glory, to express which, even the learned Apostle found it difficult to select a term, sufficiently expressive.

We have now, my afflicted brother, taken a retrospective view of the afflictions of Job, that eminent servant of God. Have we not come to the conclusion, that his suffering, as well as his faith and patience, were almost, if not quite unparalleled ? Here, our faith was brought almost to a stand, to know how to reconcile the dealings of God, in laying his hand of affliction, so heavily, upon so good a man, with the character given of him in the Bible, as being most kind and fatherly to his people. But in tracing the matter

through, we found that the difficulty was entirely removed, to our satisfaction. If we were totally unacquainted with the process of refining metals, we might think it a very bad policy, for a refiner to cast his gold into the red hot crucible, we might think that it was intended for its destruction; but a little patience removes our misapprehension; we see that not a particle of the gold is destroyed, and yet all its impurity is removed; so that in the end, it shines with greater brilliancy. God knows what is best for us in order to prepare us for the blessings he has in store for us.

How far the foregoing remarks may have operated upon your mind, to reconcile you to bear the afflictions, which your heavenly Father has seen fit to place upon you, I can not say; but as for myself, I think the reflections have proved profitable; for they have led me, through the blessing of God, to feel a strong desire, to be governed by the same holy temper of mind, so eminently displayed

by Job, that faithful and beloved servant of God.

My afflicted brother, I had so shaped my foregoing remarks, as to close with the last sentence, lest I should intrude upon your patience ; but upon further reflection, I have concluded to refer you to some other cases, in which God has overruled the afflictions of his people for their good. In so doing, let me call your attention to the afflictions of the Patriarch Jacob. Although his afflictions do not appear to have been as weighty as those of Job, yet I have no doubt that, to him, they were equally so ; for it does not so much depend upon the nature of the afflictions, as it does upon our being prepared to meet them. For instance, fifty men in a strong fortress, might bid defiance to five hundred who might attempt to assault them ; so it is with a servant of God, if he is found, when trials overtake him, standing behind the strong fortification of faith, hope, and patience, he, like Job, can triumph over them. But, alas for poor

Jacob! he having apprehended no danger, was thrown off his guard, and he ventured out into the open field, and by so doing, he received a wound from which he did not recover, for many days.

The history of Jacob and his family presents before us a subject of a most interesting character; especially as it relates to Joseph, who was to become the savior of his parents and his brethren, together with the Egyptians, from the famine that was to spread over the land. Throughout this eventful circumstance, we discover a most wonderful display of the wisdom and power of God, in overruling the wickedness of Joseph's brethren, in selling him to the Ishmaelite merchants, for about ten dollars and twenty-two cents, to become a slave in Egypt, in order to bring about one of the most happy events that had ever transpired, in relation to his family. However, all this being hid from poor old Jacob's mind, consequently it could not have had any in-

fluence in consoling him under his afflictions; for he verily believed that his son Joseph was dead, and that wild beasts had devoured him; the circumstantial evidences were so plain, as to put the matter beyond the least reasonable doubt. However, if Jacob's faith had been as strong as that of Job, he would not have made use of such despairing language as he uttered, when he said, "I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning."

This language seems to indicate a want of full confidence in God, and is unlike that of Job, who said, "if he slay me, I will trust in him." However, my brother, it ill becomes us to censure the old patriarch; for should we be placed in similar circumstances, it would put our faith to such a stand, that I fear that our language would not be more honorable to our religious character, than his was; especially, if we take the whole matter into consideration. Joseph was the son of his old age, and the

son of his beloved Rachel, and from the prophetic visions with which he was favored, and in which a clear indication was given, that he was to take a high stand in his father's family ; as they were all to bow in reverence to him, and as the old man now believed that Joseph was dead, and consequently that these visions were a delusion. This, no doubt, had a tendency to stagger his faith, and thus open the floodgates of sorrow upon his mind, causing him to sink under the burden, refusing to be comforted. However, he found in the sequel, that although "weeping may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning." So it was with Jacob, for when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to convey him and his family to Egypt, the old man's heart was revived, and he said, "it is enough, Joseph is alive ; I will go and see him before I die."

Now, my brother, I would say to you, what a long life experience has taught me, that it is best for us to try to become rec-

onciled to the will of God, in all the afflictions he may see fit to send upon us, and thus let patience have its perfect work. God has some good purpose to be answered, by our afflictions. Sometimes, they are intended to reclaim our wandering steps. Hence, said David, "before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I have kept thy word." Sometimes it is to try our faith, as it is said that "God tempted (or tried) Abraham"; that is, he put his faith to the test, by commanding him to offer up his son Isaac, as a sacrifice. Abraham did not stand to argue the point; but without a murmuring word, went in obedience to the command of God, and when he was raising his hand to strike the fatal blow, his hand was stayed, the power of faith had triumphed. God had prepared a substitute, a ram caught by the horns, in the thicket. Thus Abraham's faith was sufficiently tried, it being the purpose of his heart, to do what God had commanded, however trying to his feelings, and

however difficult it might be, to reconcile the act with the promise which God had made, in relation to his son Isaac. Thus his faith predominated when there was no hope arising from natural causes; for he knew that as Isaac was given to him by a supernatural power, so by the same power he could be raised from the dead. Hence we see, that Abraham is set forth in the Bible as our exemplar, and father of all them that believe.

Let us learn then, while suffering under affliction, to put our trust in God, do our duty, and leave the event with him. This it is true, is a very hard lesson to learn. Still, it is of the greatest importance that we should learn it. David found it hard, at times, to calm the tumultuous passions of his mind. We hear him exclaiming on one occasion, "deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water spouts, all thy waves and thy billows have gone over me." Hear the language of Jeremiah, "Is it nothing to you

all ye that pass by, behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger." It is right we should feel the rod, and confess our sins, and mourn over them, forsaking every appearance of evil, that we may be found the faithful servants of him who bore our sins in his own body on the tree.

Let us examine, for a moment, as to the nature and extent of our afflictions. Were we once rich, abounding in wealth, and have we now become reduced, and become poor? This, we well know is very trying to the natural feelings; but have we forgotten what was said of our blessed Lord, that "he who was rich, became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be made rich"? Have we been reduced so low, that we had no bed to lie upon? This was the case with our Lord; for said he, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay

his head." These reflections may have a tendency to lighten our burdens. Are we ready to say with Jeremiah, "was there ever sorrow like my sorrow?" Our Lord's sorrows were far greater; he was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep dumb before her shearer, so opened he not his mouth." Let us, therefore, "consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest we be weary and faint in our minds," bearing our afflictions with patience; for, "if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him."

THE PILGRIM'S PATHWAY.

This is a world of trouble, I now am passing through ;
And as I am a pilgrim, my journey I'll pursue ;
My path is full of dangers, beset on every hand,
I, through this way must travel, to Canaan's happy land.

Although so many centuries have gone their rapid round,
No other way to heaven has ever yet been found ;
The patriarchs and prophets to us do plainly say,
We can not go to heaven in any other way.

Both Christ and his Apostles through tribulation came,
And all the saints in heaven have had to do the same ;
O let us then take courage, and on our way pursue ;
This is the way to heaven, we now are passing through.

'Tis Jesus, our great leader, has mark'd the path we tread,
And gives us bread from heaven, by which our souls are fed ;
He is the cloudy pillar, that lights our path around,
While in the path of sinners no light can there be found.

He is the rock of Horeb, from whence the waters flow,
To satisfy our thirstings, while traveling here below.
The wicked are determined to bring us to a stand,
But we will set our faces for Canaan's happy land.

The Jordan lies before us, its stream we must pass through,
Let us be up and going, and on our way pursue ;
Soon Jesus will give orders, the waters to divide,
Then we will pass the Jordan, and land on Canaan's side.

There we shall meet those pilgrims, once burning at the stake,
Because they loved the Savior, and would not him forsake ;
There we shall dwell with Jesus, his songs of praise repeat,
O then, my brother pilgrim, our bliss will be complete.

We'll talk no more of trials, we meet from day to day ;
We'll bear them all with patience, they soon will pass away.
Our days, you know, are numbered, we have no time to stay,
Our journey may be ended, before another day.

CHAPTER VII.

TO PROFESSING CHRISTIANS.—IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL PIETY.

MY remarks, throughout this chapter, will be devoted to the importance of personal piety. This subject should claim the attention of every Christian, and to such I would address myself, upon the present occasion. Beloved brethren in the Lord, it is my earnest wish, that I may be instrumental, in the hands of God, in stirring up your minds to the love and practice of holiness; for “without holiness, no man shall see the Lord,” and nothing can be better calculated to promote our spiritual interest, than to enter into a close examination, as to the evidences we possess of our being the children of God.

The Apostle speaks of heaven as being an inheritance, where are all the treasures of those who shall be found to be the heirs

of salvation ; so that, when their toils on earth shall be ended, they will be put in the full possession of all those blessings, which God has laid up for them that love him ; they being the heirs of promise. Now the great question to be decided is this, are we the children of God ? for “ if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ ” ; so that, in proving our relation to God as children, we also prove our heirship. Now, to prove this to our own satisfaction, is a matter of the greatest importance ; and in order to this, we must have an internal evidence ; nothing short of this will satisfy the real Christian. The false professor is satisfied with an outward show of piety ; and the reason is obvious, they have never been born again, consequently they have no internal evidence, and it is vain to look there for it. This however, is not the case, with the truly pious, for they are born of God, and have the witness within themselves ; they having the

Spirit to bear witness with their spirits, that they are born of God, and are led to cry, Abba, Father.

In this change, they receive "an unction from the Holy One and know all things," being divinely taught to know the working of the Spirit, diffusing the true principles of grace, and the love of God in their souls, and scattering the ignorance and darkness of the carnal mind. They become divinely illuminated, and know all things, so far as relates to the working of the Holy Spirit in their souls. They are taught to know themselves to be great sinners, and Christ to be a great savior, God to be their Father, and to know the love of God.

This is the root from which every branch of true piety has its origin. The love of God is the mainspring of every holy action, so that whatever may be our personal or official character, either in or out of the church, if found destitute of this heavenly grace, it will avail us nothing in the great

day of accounts, when God will judge the secrets of men's hearts. The Apostle Paul is very plain and full upon this point. Hear what he says, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity (love), I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophesy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

Hence, we discover that whatever may have been our professions of being the children of God, and however many sacrifices we may have made in order to gain a title to the joys of heaven, it will be found, at last, but an empty show if found destitute of true love to God. We may have every appearance, as to the external forms of a

devotional Christian. We may preach and pray, so as to become elated with our performances, and charm the ears of others, and yet every motive be the offspring of a depraved heart. He is a wise man, who can govern his own heart, at all times, so as to keep it under proper control; for many have been deceived by it, until the die has been cast, that has sealed their eternal destiny. No doubt, many a piece of base coin has passed for pure gold, for many years, until it was detected by the refiner. Let us not conclude that these remarks are too cutting for us to bear. They will do us no harm, for it is best that we should know the worst of ourselves; and we need to pray earnestly, that God would "search us, and try us, and see if there be any wicked way in us, and lead us in the way everlasting." Some may be led to conclude that there is not much danger of professors being deceived, at this present day, in which we have so much preaching, and

every one can hear it, who is so disposed. This may appear very plausible at the first glance ; yet upon a more considerate thought upon the subject, we must perceive that there is a vast difference between now and the days in which Christ and his Apostles lived ; for persons professing Christ at that day, had a heavy cross to take up ; for they, at once, exposed themselves to afflictions of a most formidable character. They had no law upon which they could depend, to protect either their lives or property. This formed a great barrier, to prevent persons from making a profession of the name of Christ, who were not constrained by a supernatural influence. And yet, how earnestly did both Christ and his Apostles warn their hearers, against being deceived by the falsity of the human heart. This being the case, we must perceive that there is much more need of caution at the present day, in which the cross has ceased to exist. Instead of its being a cross now to profess

the name of Christ, it is thought to be most honorable to have our names enrolled in some church book, and there is now no stigma resting upon the profession of religion, that can in the least debar them from the society of the great and noble of the land.

We know nothing of what the martyrs had to suffer on account of their profession, being cast into prison, laid upon the rack, bound to the stake, and burned to death. And why all this? because they loved their Master, and would obey him. Now, my brethren, in a case like this, it would be far less difficult for us to determine as to the real state of our hearts, but as the matter stands with us, while there is no cross to bear, and the world smiling upon us, it is more difficult to come to a right decision; and there can be no doubt that many have lived and died in the church, and yet remained destitute of a saving knowledge of the power of religion in their souls.

If others have been deceived, is there not a possibility that we may be deceived? We may have gained a very extensive knowledge of the sacred writings and of the various points of doctrine they contain, so as to argue upon them with great ability, and still remain unacquainted with the nature of true godliness in the soul.

Now as this lays at the foundation of our final and eternal happiness, no means should be neglected in order to ascertain the real state of the case ; for sad will be our condition, if found deceived at last, in our expectation of future happiness. Our hearts are deceitful and desperately wicked, so that we can not be too close in our examination, especially as the cross has ceased to exist, and the world is now smiling upon us ; and I think that we have some reason to fear that there has been too much of a compromise between the church and the world. The men of the world are willing to recognize religion, provided it can be

so modified as to reduce it to a mere form of godliness, without the power. This is the reason why the cross has ceased to exist, and not that there is any more real union between the spirit of true piety and that of the world; and I believe that if all who profess the religion of the Bible were really pious, they would soon realize the truth of the Apostle's declaration, that "if any man will live godly in Christ Jesus, he shall suffer persecution." Let us try, then, my brethren, to be Bible Christians, let the event be what it may.

The Apostle Paul lays down three governing principles, which he terms faith, hope, and charity, but the greatest of these is charity. Now these divine principles are supernatural; that is, they are of a heavenly origin. As to faith, the Apostle says, that "it is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God." The meaning of the Apostle seems to be, that this faith does not belong to man in his present fallen state. It is true that he

has a faith, but it is found wanting as to the spirit or life ; it has no active power of holiness, to influence the motives, and direct them in a right channel ; it has no propelling power, to urge the soul forward in acts of obedience to God ; it draws no consolation to the soul from the death and resurrection of Christ. Hence the Apostle James terms it “a dead faith,” and classes it with the faith of devils ; but that faith which we receive from God is active ; it works by love, it purifies the heart, and overcomes the world, and stands connected with the salvation of the soul. The Christian is made wise unto salvation ; his faith is resting upon Christ as the only foundation which God hath laid in Zion.

Hope is another gift most valuable to the Christian, which he receives from God, and from the grateful feelings of heart he is ready to express himself in the language of Paul, “now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, which hath loved

us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace." And again he says, "which hope we have as an anchor to the soul both sure and steadfast." The similitude is quite illustrative of the Christian's hope. We are all acquainted with the use of an anchor, as belonging to a vessel. That it is intended to be cast overboard, that it may lay hold of the bottom of the sea or river, to secure the ship from being driven by the wind or current of the tide upon the rocks or shoals ; and thus the ship is safe, where the anchoring ground is good. The Christian, like the vessel, is always in danger of being driven away from a faithful discharge of his duty to God, to the loss of all his comfort and religious enjoyments, when separated from the anchor of his hope. He is in danger from the strong wind of temptation, the allurements of the world, and the current of his own wicked inclinations, but his anchor, hope, holds him fast. It is cast not

upon the bottom of the sea, but up into heaven, within the veil, which is far better anchoring ground ; it is fastened to the rock Christ. Thus the Christian can sing,

“ Hope is my anchor firm and strong,
While tempests blow and billows rise.”

The Apostle concludes by naming charity or love, which he says is the greatest of them all.

“ This is the grace that lives and sings,
When faith and hope shall cease ;
'Tis this shall strike our joyful strings,
In the sweet realms of bliss.”

Faith and hope belong to us during this life. They always prove loving companions, but we can not take them with us through the Jordan of death, into the heavenly Canaan ; but love will abide with us forever. I have said that the love of God is the root, from which every branch of true piety springs. It is the fountain from which springs every holy thought and action, and it elevates the mind above the sordid pleasures of this transitory life ; indeed, it is

this that gives a foretaste of the heavenly glory. The Christian has a witness within himself, that he is a child of God and an heir of heaven. If we love God, we will love our brethren also, as they bear his likeness. Now, my brethren, if in the course of our examination, we find that our experience compares with the illustration which the Bible gives of Christian experience; feeling ourselves stripped of self and self-dependence, and only hope for life and salvation centring in Christ, as the only sacrifice for sin, and the love of God inspiring our souls to love and good works; in this case, we may reasonably conclude that we have been made new creatures in Christ Jesus, and have passed from death unto life, having been made partakers of his holiness. The love of God now becomes the ruling passion of the soul, controlling the thoughts and actions, and bringing them into sweet conformity to the will of God.

“’Tis love that makes our cheerful feet,
In swift obedience move.”

If our souls dwell under the influence of this love, our fruit will be unto holiness, and the end, everlasting life. This love prepares the Christian to take up his cross, and follow the Savior through both good and evil report, and he is ready to say

“Through floods and flames if Jesus leads,
I'll follow where he goes ;
Hinder me not shall be my cry,
Though earth and hell oppose.”

He loves the people of God, and delights to meet them in the sanctuary, to unite with them in the delightful solemnities of the worship of God ; and he feels it one of his highest privileges to become united with them in church relation, and to be governed by the rules laid down in the Bible, both of faith and practice, and left with the church, for the government of her members ; which, when properly attended to, in the spirit of meekness, can not fail of producing the most happy results. By this means, we promote the peace and prosperity of the church, and this forms a pow-

erful engine to put to silence those who may assail the cause of Christ and his church.

Oh how delightful it is to see, brethren living together in love and unity, striving together to keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace, and praying earnestly for the prosperity of the church! And as this state of union and brotherly love depends much upon the blessing of God attending the administration of the Gospel, pray earnestly for your pastors, that their labors may prove successful, in winning souls to Christ; for without the blessing of God, Paul may plant and Apollos water but all in vain, if God withhold the blessing. Hold up their hands, when they are ready to faint under their discouragements, crying out "who is sufficient for these things?" Brethren, never let us be found among those disorderly members, who are always ready to pull down, while the pastor is building up; let not our sacrificial altars be defaced

by a worldly and slothful disposition of mind. Let us not then brethren, be weary in well doing, for in due time we shall reap, if we faint not.

Let us bear in mind also, that heaven is all the way up hill; it is very easy sliding back but hard to regain the steps we lose. Let us therefore be kind to each other, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, in the spirit of meekness, contributing to the relief of the poor saints, bearing in mind that we all belong to the same family, being children of the same heavenly parent. Let the poor saints comfort themselves, that although they are poor in this world, yet they have a large treasure in heaven. To my young brethren I would say, try to become well acquainted with your Bible, and it will be a solace to you in your declining age, when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and those who look out of the windows be darkened, if your life should be prolonged, to see those days.

The Bible, my brethren, is a precious treasure to the soul, hungering and thirsting after the consolations of the Gospel. If we were deprived of it, we should know how to estimate its value much better. Before the art of printing was discovered, it required the wages of a poor man thirteen years, to procure a manuscript of the Bible, thus placing it out of the reach of the poor altogether. We have an account of a very pious woman, who being acquainted with a bookseller, was in the habit of borrowing a Bible. On a certain day, she applied to the bookseller for this favor, which was granted. After she had left the store, a wealthy man being present, inquired in relation to her case; he was informed by the bookseller that she was a poor woman and very pious, and loved the Bible very much. The heart of this wealthy man was touched with such sympathy, that he paid for the Bible and left word that when she should return with the Bible, she should

be informed that it was hers. On her return, she hearing the glad tidings, clasped it to her heart, and exclaimed, O precious treasure !

We shall now close this chapter by reminding the reader that time is short. Our Master has placed us in his vineyard to work, and has commanded us to work while the day lasts. There is much to be done, and but little time to do it in, let us therefore be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.

CHAPTER VIII.

IMPORTANCE OF A HOLY LIFE.

WE will devote this chapter to some further remarks, addressed to those who have professed religion, upon the importance of living a holy life, in the service of our blessed Lord ; so that every word and action may portray the life of an humble and devout Christian, the servant of Christ, the man of God, maintaining that integrity, which is so highly ornamental to the Christian character ; bearing in mind that we have been placed in the Church, as lights in this dark, benighted world, and we are to let our light shine, that those around us, seeing our good works, may glorify our father in heaven, taking knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus.

We are to take up our cross daily, denying ourselves all ungodliness and worldly lust, and live soberly, righteously, and godly. We have a wicked heart to conquer, and he

that can do this, so as to rule and govern it, is better than he that taketh a city ; that is, he is more wise and powerful. Brethren, we have learned both from the Bible and from our own experience, that "it is an evil and bitter thing to depart from the Lord," for the backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways. The Lord speaking of such says, "they are joined to their idols, let them alone." Yes, let them alone, for they will soon become sick of their ways, and be glad to return, as many have done, with a broken heart.

The heavenly Jerusalem is built upon an elevated plain, the mount of God. The only road leading to the Celestial city, is the King's highway of holiness, a most pleasant and delightful way, rendered so by the presence of our blessed Lord, who causes all difficulties to vanish. No lion is found there. Even the martyrs were not heard to complain of the way being rugged. No, for they could smile at the devouring elements, while

they were blazing around them. Nothing could harm them. Their eyes were fixed upon the cross. It is only when we lose sight of the cross, that we lose our way and have to clamber over the rocks and mountains of despondency, which has ever been found to be a dark and dangerous way ; and all who have turned aside from the King's highway, have found it to be a slippery path to travel in. David found it so, for he says, "my feet had well nigh slipped, while I saw the prosperity of the wicked." It is a dangerous thing for a Christian to have his eyes turned from the cross, to worldly ease and prosperity, for it is sure to lead him astray. David only recovered his former standing, by retracing his steps to the house of God, where he learned his folly, by having his eyes open to see the end of the wicked. The evil consequence resulting from a backslidden state of the heart, is not merely the loss of the enjoyment of religion ; but the state of the heart is the die that stamps its own image upon the general

character and deportment of the professor ; and by this the world judges of the truth or falsity of the religion he professes ; while on the other hand, if the deportment of the professor be exemplary, it has a powerful influence upon the minds of beholders, well calculated to make a favorable impression, such as can not be easily resisted.

But, brethren, what would be our sad feelings if we had been instrumental in hardening the hearts of sinners, and making them more bold in blaspheming the name of our Master and his holy religion, and thus placing them at a far greater distance from a hope of salvation ? In this case, the poor afflicted pastor may preach like an angel, yet all in vain. The sinner's mind, having become so well fortified in his stronghold, that as well might a soldier attempt to make a breach in the wall of an impregnable fortress with a shot gun, as for the pastor to make any serious impressions upon the minds of such hearers, who have become thus hardened.

I have often conversed with characters of this description, but have always been repulsed, by being referred to some delinquent member of the church, whose conduct has become disgraceful to the cause of religion. Hence we see the importance of our doing all in our power, to counteract such a wicked influence, so injurious to the cause of Christ. In order to do this, we must try to keep open, spiritual intercourse between our souls and heaven ; we must bear in mind that the Bible represents us as spiritual merchants ; we commenced business, when our souls were renewed by the spirit of God, and we were made new creatures in Christ Jesus. Although we had no stock of our own to trade upon, yet we found a friend in Christ, whose riches can not be exhausted, he being one of the three members of the commercial house of heaven. They are the three which compose the royal family. Their trade is so immense that no estimate can be given. Their object is to enrich the world with that

wisdom which is from above, making men wise unto salvation, “the merchandise thereof being better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.”

Every spiritual merchant may earnestly recommend his merchandise without falsity. Even ministers of the Gospel may publish it from their pulpits, that Paul sums up this merchandise in true “godliness, which is great gain, being profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” Recommend your merchandise wherever you go, not only by your word, but by every act of your life. Let your whole deportment establish your character as a man of integrity, in whom the fullest confidence can be placed. Although your merchandise is to be disposed of upon such liberal terms, being without money and without price, yet the more you dispose of this merchandise, the richer you will become ; for there is an invisible hand constantly increasing your stock tenfold beyond your out-

lay, so that while you are imparting heavenly instruction to others, in order to make them wise unto salvation, you are enriching your own souls. What encouragement to be diligent in your business, and bear in mind that your benefactor will expect to hear from you often by letter, in which you will doubtless record your grateful feelings, and what progress you have made in the trust committed to you.

Now, dear brethren, as you have put up your sign over your door, and are recognized by all as spiritual merchants, let not your profession become disgraced by your negligence in business. Be active; follow the example of your benefactor when he was upon earth who went about doing good, making many wise unto salvation. However, we must not expect to prosper in our business, without difficulties. We must expect opposition from the world around us, and even among our own families, for you know that we are all born with a vail over our

faces, so that we can not discover the nature and value of our spiritual merchandise. Indeed, we all have a natural dislike to it, until this vail is removed. Old prejudices, especially in matters of religion, are hard to be overcome.

Not only so, but we have other influences brought against us, occasioned by so many who profess to be spiritual merchants, but turn out to be deceivers. When they commence business, they put up a splendid sign over their door, and instead of receiving a stock from the commercial house in heaven, have polished up their old stock, to deceive the people by passing off upon them worthless merchandise, manufactured in the lower region, instead of that which comes from the upper region, more valuable than fine gold, which endureth unto everlasting life. These merchants, being deceivers, soon become bankrupt, and down goes their sign, and they return to their former calling, the feeding of swine. Now, these false merchants

having played the rogue, the censure of the world now falls upon all the true spiritual merchants. This adds to their grief, that the holy cause of their master must suffer so much from the blasphemer. But go on brethren, bear the reproach with patience ; our master is preparing a place for us, and he will soon come and take us to himself, that where he is we may be also. If we suffer with him, we shall be glorified with him.

Let us learn then to be patient in tribulation. This we know, is a very hard lesson to learn, yet it is one of very great importance. We should endure reproach, not merely because we can not avoid it, but rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer reproach for the sake of our blessed master, who suffered so much for us, and hath left an example of patience, and said that we should follow his footsteps. We should be very guarded over our thoughts, words, and actions, in order to bring them into accordance with the spirit of the gospel ; not merely in

order to bear the appearance of piety before men, but to receive the approbation of him who searches the heart. Integrity is that which adorns the Christian character.

Alas! we find too many professors, who are wanting in purity of principle. Their word or profession of friendship, is not to be depended upon ; and when you need them, they are not to be found, except as a snake in the grass, like their brother Judas, who betrayed his Lord. Let such bear in mind their brother's fate. Lord deliver us from such professors, and from our wicked and corrupt natures, and purify our hearts, and cleanse us from all our imperfection and bring us finally to heaven !

CHAPTER IX.

TO THE UNCONVERTED.

THIS chapter is devoted to the spiritual interests of those who have no saving knowledge of Christ. My dear friends, let me assure you that the subject which we are about to present for your consideration is one of vast importance, and one in which we are all deeply interested. I have reference to the salvation of the soul, that immortal part of man, which in its original purity was stamped with the divine impress, though now guilty and depraved by sin. This immortal treasure is of unspeakable value; indeed, there is nothing that can compare with it. Should we compare it with all the wealth, honors, and pleasures of the world, what would they be in the scale to compensate us for the loss of our souls? They would bear no comparison. They would at once sink into insignificance.

They can not give that solid happiness which the soul requires, and what little they may afford is of too short a date to be taken into account.

Are we prepared to solve and answer the question which our Savior propounds, "what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Now the manner in which the question is proposed, is quite significant in its meaning, for it is in effect saying that it would be a very unprofitable exchange. For a man to lose his natural life is considered a very great loss. Satan, who is said to be the father of lies, spoke the truth once, when he said "all that a man hath will he give for his life"; still we may lose our lives, and yet save our souls; but in losing our souls we lose our all, and when once lost, it can not be recovered again. By the loss of the soul, we understand the final banishment from God, and the glory of his power, and the enduring the wrath of God forever. Is

it not wonderful, that rational and intelligent beings, should be so thoughtless and unconcerned about the soul, as to neglect its salvation? If our lives or property are in danger, how earnest we are in providing for their safety. If an assault from the assassin or robber be anticipated, then locks, bars, and bolts are brought into requisition. If disease of body threaten us with fatality, a remedy is with speed sought after.

Now to make the matter more plain, suppose we had a large amount of gold in our houses, and at the same time we had a number of servants in whose honesty we could not place the least confidence, could we feel satisfied in letting that valuable treasure be exposed to those faithless servants, they having no regard for our interest? I think not. Should we not rather seek to secure it from depredation by committing it to some tried and trusty hand, in the bank, or under lock and key? Why not then regard the counsels of heaven, in

relation to the safety of that immortal treasure, the soul, the value of which is clearly demonstrated in the Bible, as being far beyond conception. And shall we still expose this invaluable treasure to the control of the wicked propensities of our nature, they being in league with Satan the great destroyer of souls, to prove our final ruin? Must we give up to be conquered, and lose our souls, by bartering them for the sinful pleasures of a short life? Alas, how sad the thought! While we look around us, and gaze upon the busy multitude, we see them toiling both in body and in mind; and what for? for worldly treasure that can serve them but a few short years at most, and all to the total neglect of that immortal treasure, the soul.

How can we account for this folly and indifference? The Bible says that "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine unto

them." Man is a depraved being, he has lifted up the hand of rebellion, being an enemy to God and his government, and is now resting under the sentence of death, which will be executed upon him, if not rescued by the atoning sacrifice of Christ. There is a great change necessary in order to fit us to dwell with pure and holy beings, who are exclaiming "holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty!" Why, an unregenerated soul, to be there, would wish itself in the company of those wicked fiends of the lower region, for the presence of God would be a terror to it. O pause for a moment, and examine the matter well. Think seriously upon its importance. Perhaps you may have been persuading yourselves that your sins are not so numerous as they have been represented; if the Lord should cause the light of divine truth to shine into your understanding, you would be ready to exclaim, that the half has never been told you. You would then discover a great difference

between hearing of your sins, and having them placed before your eyes.

It is the holiness of God in his law, that discovers to us our sins, for "by the law is the knowledge of sin." We know that all this is hard for the unenlightened mind to comprehend. Job, although he was a very pious man, yet on becoming more fully enlightened as to the holiness of the Deity, exclaimed, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eyes seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Paul was eminently pious; yet we hear him exclaiming "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The more pious a man is, the more he discovers his imperfections; the whiter our garments are, the more clearly we discover their spots.

The religion of the Bible is that which exposes and brings to light the hidden things of darkness, and corrects the lives and morals of men, and has done more for

the moralization of the world, than any other system ever invented. It has overcome every obstacle (one of the most formidable of which, is the opposition of the natural heart), and that in many cases, armed with almost absolute power ; and although it had a small beginning, yet it has triumphed over every obstacle, and it must triumph, until the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. Infidelity would trample under feet the religion of the Bible, because some of its professors have disgraced it by acts of immorality. In this there seems to be a want of candor, for in the religion of the Bible, there is nothing but purity of thought, word, and action inculcated, for it teaches us to “deny ourselves of all ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly.” Now, if professors violate these principles, either in a few or many cases, it is not doing justice to attribute it to religion, which condemns every

immoral act. It would be as reasonable to impute the stumbling of a man in open day, to the light of the sun, while his eyes were directed in some other direction.

In my foregoing remarks, it has been my object to point out the danger of living in a state of sin and rebellion against God. I have pointed out, in some measure, the happy effects which religion has produced in the civilization and moralization of the world. Still there is a higher branch of religious science to be taught, in order to salvation. We must know what it is to be born again, as our Lord said to Nicodemus, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again." Nicodemus was a learned man, yet he had never become acquainted with this kind of science, it being of a heavenly origin. Without this change we never can see the kingdom of God. If we wish to become more fully enlightened upon this subject, let us examine as to the effect produced by the Holy Spirit attend-

ing the preaching of the Gospel on the day of Pentecost; for while the Apostles were preaching, the word was directed, like a piercing arrow, cutting to the very hearts of the hearers, and they were led to cry out with one accord, "men and brethren, what must we do?" Peter had been charging home their sins upon them, and they felt themselves condemned. Their hearts were now broken down, and they felt their sins to be a great burden, and were anxious to know what they must do to be saved. Peter at once preached Christ to them, for he knew that there was no other name given under heaven, by which they could be saved. So that in answer to their question he said, "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

In preaching Christ, we must of necessity preach the law, for where there is no law there is no transgression. It is only by the law that we have the knowledge of sin. Paul says, "I was alive without the law, but

when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Now we do not suppose that Paul was without a knowledge of the letter of the law. This can not be true, for he was well acquainted with the language of the law ; he knew its meaning when it says, " thou shalt not kill " or " commit adultery." Indeed, he could expound the law according to its literal meaning, but its life or spirituality he did not comprehend. However, as soon as his mind became enlightened to discover the true character of the law, as being summed up in pure love to God as the motive power to every action of the soul ; he like every enlightened sinner, sunk under the ponderous weight of guilt charged against him, as having come short in every point, so that he died to all hope of being justified by the deeds of the law. Now his mind was turned to Christ, who having answered the demands of the law, by his holy life and sacrificial death, became " the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth ;" so

that, although the law killed Paul, yet he rose again, to live a more glorious life in Christ; a life of justification from all things, from which he could not have been justified by the law of Moses.

Some have been induced to modify the nature of this change, so as to render it more easy to make a profession of religion, and thus add more members to the church. However, with such professors, we fear it will prove a sad affair; they not being able to give a reason of the hope within them. If we take into consideration every thing in relation to this change, it can not be considered a matter of small account. The language made use of in the Bible, in order to illustrate the nature of this change, shows it to be a matter of vast importance. Persons having experienced this change, are said to be new creatures, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." Again he is said to be "created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Now such language seems to express some-

thing more than merely a form of godliness. There is a created power, forming in the soul a holy and heavenly principle of grace, or “a new man, created in righteousness and true holiness.” This work, whatever the infidel may think of it, is worthy of that God to whom it is ascribed. Hence the Apostle, in addressing his brethren at Philippi, says, “being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” This work to which the Apostle here refers, is the work of grace in the soul, regenerating it and fitting it for the service of God. In its original formation as it came from the hand of God, it was beautified with every principle of purity; every power of the soul was formed in strict accordance with the holy will of its creator, crowned with honor; but in honor it abode not, but fell from that state of rectitude. Alas, may we not exclaim, how have the mighty fallen! How has that beautiful temple of man’s soul become debased, by

the entering in of those wicked fiends of the bottomless pit, pulling down the sacred altar, extinguishing the holy fire, and every power of the soul has become depraved, so that we can not marvel that the Bible gives us such a debased character of man, in his unrenewed state. "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable ; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." Now the renewing of the soul, and fitting it for the temple of the Holy Ghost to dwell in, is the work of the same creating power as gave to Adam his form and being. Hence says the Apostle, "we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works." This is a being born again, and receiving a new and spiritual life ; "old things having passed away, and all things become new." When the soul, enlightened by the spirit of God, is brought into the glorious light and liberty of the Gospel, it is but a be-

gun work, which is to progress until the soul is taken to heaven.

Now, my dear friends, God has provided a Savior for us, and the preaching of the Gospel is the means by which we are to be made partakers of the blessings of salvation. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Therefore let me exhort you to attend the preaching of the Gospel, and read the Bible with a prayerful heart, that you may understand its all-important truths, that you may be profited. I have but little hope for a person living in a land of Bibles, and where the Gospel is constantly proclaimed, and who yet hardens himself against all means of instruction. We know that God can work without means, but this is not the ordinary way in which he accomplishes his purposes. God has determined the means with the end; he has given land to the farmer to till, and seed to sow, and causes the clouds to water the earth; but suppose the farmer, being a slothful man, disinclined to

labor, should reason with himself thus,—I know that I can not make the grain grow, and I may lose all my hard labor,—and thus he sits down, and lets the season pass by. Now what excuse could this farmer have to offer, in the time of harvest, while going to his neighbors to beg his bread? His excuse would amount to about the same as the poor slothful sinner would have to offer, at the day of judgment, after having spent his whole life in sin, having neglected every means which God had put in his power in order to seek the salvation of his soul.

What can the poor guilty sinner look for, at that day when God will judge the world? The sowing season will then be passed never to be recalled, and it will be then too late to repent. Every thing must be done in proper season. The harvest time will be too late for sowing. O that the world would lay this matter to heart, that while the seed time of life may last, they may be led to sow to the Spirit, so that when the harvest may come,

they may reap life everlasting! God has sent his son into the world to save sinners by laying down his life, that he might open a fountain to cleanse them from sin and all uncleanness, and has given us the Bible to read, and sent his servants to publish this salvation; yet if the sinner is not cleansed in that fountain, of what avail can all this be to him? Medicine, however efficacious, can not do a sick man any good, if it is not applied. Life is the time in which the soul must be stamped for eternity. If it is there found with a divine impress, it will land in glory, but if not, its sad doom will be endless despair. Let me, therefore, exhort you to plead earnestly with God, like the publican, that he may have mercy upon you, that you may be prepared for a better world. Read your Bible with prayerful attention, go to the house of God, and hear the Gospel preached, that you may receive instruction, in relation to yourselves as lost sinners, without hope in Christ, and the great salvation published in the Gospel.

These are the means which God has appointed, by which we are to be brought to the knowledge of the truth. The work must be done now, it admits of no delay ; the die will soon be cast that will seal thy doom forever ; time that has been misspent, can never be recalled. Our characters must be stamped in time, for eternity. If at death, our souls are found stamped with the divine impress, it will be our passport to the joys of heaven. Now my dear friends, let me ask you a serious question ; have you ever felt yourselves, like the returning prodigal ? Do you now lament that you have left your father's house, and wandered so far from your plenteous home, and by it ruined yourself ? Have you gone so far that you now begin to feel that sin is an evil and bitter thing ? Have you become sickened with the sinful pleasures of the world ? Have they become unsatisfying to you, as the husks that the swine do feed upon, and are you reduced to such extreme poverty, that you are ready to perish with hunger ?

Poor soul, I know how to feel for you, for I have felt the same ; for I was once a poor prodigal, and wandered as far from home as you have done ; but I became so dissatisfied with my way of living, I could find nothing but wretchedness and poverty, my garment was completely tattered to raggedness, and so filthy that I was sickened at the sight ; never until now had my eyes been opened, to see my hopeless condition. I called to mind my father's house. I thought why should I stay here and perish, while my father's house abounds with plenty ? I came to the resolve to make the attempt, and set off with little hope of success, but while I was a great way off, to my astonishment, I saw my Father coming ; but I can not describe my feelings, while thinking what a wicked and ungrateful son I had been. O how can I bear the wrath of my father, when he meets me ? I saw him running to meet me, and to my surprise, instead of meeting a frown from my father, I met his smile, and that with open arms ; my

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filthy garments, sin and my own righteousness, which I found to be in a most ragged condition, were now removed, and a most beautiful white robe placed upon me, the righteousness of Christ; and on entering my father's house, all was joy and gladness, and such a feasting time I never saw before, and I have been feasting upon the bounty of my father's house ever since I returned home.

And now, my brother prodigal, I can not express the joy I have felt ever since my return. This makes me so desirous that you should return. My Savior sent me to invite you to return. Do you say that you feel yourself to be too great a sinner? This can be no objection. Indeed, the consciousness of being sinners, is what prepares us to come, for Jesus came, "not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." It is his blood that cleanses us from all sin. Do you say that your garments are too ragged and defiled? He has a white robe prepared for you; his perfect righteousness. This will give you a

title to the heavenly glory. Say, will you come? The Father says come; the Savior says come; the Spirit and the Bride (the church) say come. Say not that you are too great a sinner to come. It is true, we have all been very wicked in running away from our father's house, and spending our precious time, which to us is worth more than gold, and should have been devoted to our Father's service, together with all our intellectual endowments; but instead of applying them in such a useful and profitable way, we have made them subservient to the gratification of our depraved inclinations, and it is well for us that our Father, instead of casting us off forever, has sent his Spirit to enlighten our minds, to see our wickedness and folly, and become sick of our sinful ways, and to mourn over them as being an evil and bitter thing that we have gone so far astray. How wonderful it is, that our Father, in the midst of deserved wrath, has remembered mercy. He has sent his Son to die for us, his servants to

preach the Gospel to us, and his Holy Spirit to enlighten us ; therefore we say to you, once more, come, for all things are now ready, come tarry no longer !

O come for Jesus calls you, O come without delay,
O why should you still tarry, and make a longer stay ?
O come and join our party, we have a feast of love ;
O 'tis a taste of heaven, when we shall feast above.

O come, the feast is ready, the table now is spread,
O yes this feast is furnished, here starving souls are fed.
O come, why should you tarry and stay another day ?
O come, all things are ready, how can you stay away ?

CHAPTER X.

A WORD TO PARENTS.—RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION OF CHILDREN.

I HAVE learned from a long life, both by experience and observation, that the subject of parental government and instruction has been much neglected, although it merits the highest claims on our attention. This neglect, I fear, has been the fruitful source of the numerous calamities that have befallen the young and rising generation. Alas, have we not reason to fear that many parents by neglecting the instruction of their children, in the true principles of uprightness, have furnished many prisons with inmates, many victims for the scaffold, and many a victim for a drunkard's grave? But this is too sickening and heart-rending to dwell long upon. The cause and effect of this sad picture is too obvious to need much comment. The remedy is that which should claim the attention, not

only of a parent's heart, but of every heart, tender with the feeling of humanity. Many a brilliant talent has been hid in midnight darkness, for want of an early culture of the mind, in the pure principles of integrity. There is a greater responsibility resting upon parents than is commonly supposed. Our children come into the world naked, helpless, and depraved, and at the same time, possessing an intellectual capacity capable of vast improvement, with a natural inclination to evil. Under these circumstances, the great Creator has placed these little ones under the guardianship of the parent, not merely to feed and clothe them, but to instruct them. The mind of a child needs to be cultivated as much as a farm, in order to its becoming productive. A farm, if left uncultivated, will yield nothing but what is natural to the soil, such as weeds, briars, and thorns; and these are worse than useless, for they impoverish the ground. So it is with the intellectual capacity of children. They grow up with a natural in-

clination to evil. Thus the young and uneducated mind becomes deceived by the flattering appearance of the amusements and pleasures of the world.

A family bears some resemblance to a garden in which are found some valuable, tender plants, which if properly cared for by cultivation, would grow, bud, bloom, and thus make a great display of beauty ; but where the gardener is slothful, and neglects his plants, the weeds will overgrow them, and the consequence is, his plants will never bloom, but wither away in obscurity. So with a family of children, where a parent neglects the proper discipline of his children ; whatever may be the brilliancy of their talents, still they have a very poor prospect of blessing either the world or the church with their services, for they are seldom found, save in the paths of ignorance or vice. In bringing up a family of children so as to prove a blessing to themselves and others, the parent must exercise

a control over the passions of their minds, for who can not testify to the truth of what Solomon says, that "childhood and youth are vanity," and consequently they are not capacitated to govern themselves, although they are apt to think quite differently, and in some cases, to their great cost, if not their ruin.

There would be about as much hope for a number of men sent out to navigate a vessel to some distant port who had never received the least knowledge of navigation, as to send out a family of children into the world without instruction or restraint; and even with a little fortune at their disposal, they would doubtless soon founder upon the rocks of crime and dissipation. There is a fitness and adaptation in every thing in nature. This exists in a very eminent degree between the parent and the child. This has been wisely ordered by the great Creator, and consequently a great responsibility is resting upon them. Let parents therefore take warning, for God will hold them to a

strict account for the manner in which their children are educated. It is the duty of parents to feed and clothe their children; however, this requires but little comment, for although they bring nothing into the world with them, yet they have that within themselves, that more than compensates for all other deficiency. The parent at once feels a kindling of love, which recognizes in the little living form, "bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh." This natural affection the great Creator has made to exist with that little babe, the moment the parent's eye is placed upon it. Love to children has been placed in the breast of the parent, as a motive power to action, for the good of his children. Hence we see the parent, even if he be in low circumstances, laboring hard to care for his little ones, feeding, clothing, and protecting them. The rich bestow upon their children more abundantly, all produced by love, this propelling power.

But now comes on that which for certain

causes, is rendered much more difficult to accomplish, and surely not of less importance. I refer to the proper government of children, in order to promote their best interests. The design of our electing men to legislate for us, is for the good of the community at large. So in families, our Creator has enacted laws for the government of families, and placed the parent at the head, to enforce those laws; and we need not hesitate in saying, woe to that parent who neglects his duty in this matter. There are many instructions given us in the Bible, and if we will not receive them, the sin lieth at our door. Hear the voice of God by the Apostle, "ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" that is, we are to do nothing that would be calculated to excite their angry passions, but to impart such instructions as may be the best calculated to inspire their young and tender minds with the love and practice of pure

Bible principles ; for the Bible is the stand to which we are to bring our moral and religious principles to be determined. Alas, for children, where parents have all their thoughts and affections placed upon sublunary things, from which they expect to derive all their happiness, so that their discipline is in accordance with these views, and meets with the approbation of their children's natural and depraved inclination.

Now why is it that parents should be so blinded in relation to this important matter ? The reason is obvious, they are blinded by sin. Solomon said "train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Parents have been warned, both from the Bible, and from what their own eyes have witnessed, of the sad effects resulting from a neglect of a proper management of their children, especially while they are young. For a parent to rear a family of children, comprises one of the most important transactions of his life ; for upon

the proper or improper manner in which this act is performed stand involved the most serious consequences both to the parent and the children.

In order to avoid those calamities which befall many thousands, correct discipline is required. To deny that parents have sufficient love for their children to wish to render them happy would be contrary to reason, and the natural feelings of humanity. The happiness of the children is so blended with that of the parent, that they can not be separated. But the great difficulty arises from the darkness of a depraved mind which has rendered it incapable of determining as to the objects, the best calculated to produce happiness. However, the general conclusion is that it is to be found in the abundance of wealth, as though every thing else depended upon the possession of riches, even heaven itself. Hence it is, that wealth has ascended the throne of dignity, and has gained the admiration of the world; for

the keen eye of the beholder perceives that it opens a door for the gratification of every pleasurable sensation, such as the amusements, the luxuries, and honors of the world. Now in order to obtain wealth, every power of the mind is brought to bear upon this one point, and often we fear, without much regard to strict integrity.

If our halls of legislation could speak, what a sad account they would give of the frauds committed in violation of the most solemn oaths. Alas, how have the mighty fallen! Tell it not to our enemies, lest they point the finger of scorn at us. However, crime of this character is not confined to politicians, but it has defiled the blood of the nation, to a very lamentable degree. What multitudes are making haste to be rich. From whence has this broad river of crime its origin? The Savior says that, "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." This is the sad state of the heart, left uncontrolled by

some opposite influence. But are there no tributary streams, that augment this broad river of crime? Alas, we are made sad at the thought, that they are more numerous than we can calculate ; a multitude of which, emanate from the family circle, where the cords of discipline have been slackened or broken, through the tender feelings of parents, to the final ruin of their children ; opening the door for Sabbath-breaking, and attending those places of amusement, which are almost sure to introduce them into company and habits of dissipation, which will serve as a prelude to crimes of the most destructive nature.

Remember then that what is done for your children must be done in proper season. The spring is the time to plant corn, but the fall is the time to gather for use. He that neglects to plant in season, can not expect to gather. Let childhood and youth pass unimproved, and all hope is blasted. Let parents, therefore, store the minds of their children with

both literary and Bible knowledge. Be kind to your children, but let not your tender feelings control you, so far as to indulge them to their injury. Let discretion govern, and your word be their law, but let your word be in accordance with the Bible. Tender feeling in parents for their children is natural and commendable, but danger is always nigh when it is extended beyond due bounds. Alas, how many parents have had their eyes open to the truth of this, when too late to restore the victims, and have had to pass to the grave with the sad reflection, that by their indulgence, they had brought to ruin, the objects they so much loved.

Do I hear a broken-hearted parent exclaiming, "O my sons, my sons! Could I recall the days when my sons were boys, and fed at my table, how would I instruct them to pursue the path of virtue! Their seat in the house of God should not be vacated. All my energy and influence should be devoted to bring them under Bible instruction, so as to restrain

them from Sabbath-breaking and from attending those amusements which lead to vice and dissipation. But alas! the die is cast. Time, that might have been improved, is now lost forever. My sons are now swallowed up in the whirlpool of destruction. My tender feelings led to indulgence, and this proved their ruin. Two have passed from the tippling-house to the drunkard's grave, and one is now shut up within the massive gates of the penitentiary. O ye parents, is it nothing to you? Was there ever sorrow like unto my sorrow, wherewith I am afflicted, for my contempt of the counsel of heaven?"

Let parents take warning. Let them bring up their children to receive Bible instruction, to attend Sunday-school, and the house of God. By this means they will be restrained from Sabbath-breaking and from bad company. Parents, teach your children integrity, not from compulsion, but from the love of virtue. Teach them a tender feeling of sympathy for the afflicted, for although their cir-

cumstances in life may be far more comfortable than many around them, yet we know not what a day may bring forth. We may need to-morrow the same act of kindness and sympathy we extend to others to-day. Our great Creator has so arranged matters in the government of his providence, that we are all dependent upon each other. Here the rich and the poor meet together.

Let parents also teach their children candor in all their dealings with men in the business of life, that they may not degrade themselves, by the practice of those little cunning tricks so often practiced by sharpers. Parents should also teach their children economy and industry in whatever vocation they may be placed, for slothfulness and waste lead to poverty, and will clothe a man with rags. Give your children a good plain education, if nothing more, for deprived of this they lose half the enjoyment of life. No parent is so poor that he can not do this, for at this day, it can be had as cheap as the Bible, being without

money and without price ; so that should a parent neglect this duty he is censurable.

Teach your children to be cleanly, for this will add to health and comfort. However expressive of poverty, the appearance of a house or a garment may be, yet if neat and clean, it will be honored with attention. Warn your sons against foppishness and haughtiness ; for this denotes a want of good breeding, if not of good sense, and will be sure to bring down contempt upon them. Teach your daughters gentleness of speech, sweetness of temper, and neatness in dress. Restrain your children from going to those schools of vice, which afford such a pleasurable sensation to the young mind, but whose sting is as deadly as that of the bite of the most poisonous serpent ; such as the theatre, the ball-room, the circus, and the tippling-house. Some of these places, if not all, have been the ruin of multitudes of the young, in their unguarded moments.

Finally, endeavor, above all, to bring up

your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ; train them up in the way they should go, and then you may reasonably expect, in accordance with the words of Solomon, the wisest of men, that “ when they are old, they will not depart from it.”

“ See, Israel’s gentle Shepherd stands
With all engaging charms ;
Hark ! how he calls the tender lambs,
And folds them in his arms !

We bring them, Lord, by fervent prayer,
And yield them up to thee ;
With humble trust that we are thine,
Thine let our offspring be.”

CHAPTER XI.

A CLOSING WORD TO MY MINISTERING BRETHREN.

As I am about closing this little book, I feel a strong inclination to address a few lines to my brethren in the ministry; although at the same time, I must confess that I feel a considerable degree of delicacy in attempting to exhort them to a more persevering energy in the way of duty, or in communicating instruction in relation to that duty, as they themselves profess to be teachers; and especially as many of them far excel me, both in natural and acquired talents.

However, my advanced age and the great length of time I have been in the ministry, may serve as an apology. And more than this, our holy religion teaches us not to seek honor one of another, but to seek to promote each other's happiness and pros-

perity, in the cause of Christ. Whether my feeble efforts may add any thing in accomplishing this object, I can not say. A future day will determine what we have done, and what we have left undone.

Dear brethren, we have all professed to have been called in one hope of our calling, and to have received a commission from the highest authority in heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. In this legation, we have had committed to our trust one of the most wonderful embassies that ever was committed to mortal man. And we now appear as Embassadors of Christ, to deliver our message to a guilty and rebellious world, and to explain its contents, as far as possible to their understanding; for it is all-important that they should hear and believe, in order to salvation. We are well aware as to what we preach, that it is the Gospel. Thus we hear it explained by Christ himself in the commission, when he

sent his Apostles forth, he said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." Now that the Savior made use of the term in its mere abstract meaning, can not with any degree of propriety be admitted. In the preaching of both Christ and the Apostles the whole matter is fully explained, as embracing all the doctrines of grace, relating to the beginning, progression, and completion of the salvation of all who will finally meet in heaven.

The preaching of the cross lays the foundation for the whole fabric of Gospel truth to rest upon. And that sermon that has not a relative connection with this foundation will never be owned of God. Brethren, in going to the pulpit, we should never hide the cross behind us, lest we forget it and preach ourselves; but let it have a prominent place in front of the pulpit, while we unfurl its blood-stained banner before the people, pointing to it as the only hope of a dying world. Brethren, we know that

no trust could have been committed to us of equal importance, and that could have involved us in greater responsibility, so that if we misconstrue the message which has been committed to us, to be delivered in faithfulness to the people, whatever evil consequences may arise, God will require at our hands. Therefore it becomes us to be cautious how we speak and act in relation to this matter.

There is a very great responsibility resting upon the physician while administering to a sick man, for through his ignorance or carelessness, the sick man's life may be forfeited; which no doubt has been in a vast number of cases; but what is the life of the body, compared with that of the soul? If they who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars of heaven, forever and ever, what will be the doom of those who are preaching "peace, peace, to the wicked," when God has said that there is no peace? However, brethren, we are per-

suaded better things of you. We believe that you have been called with a heavenly calling, and thus God hath counted you faithful, putting you into the ministry. Whatever may have been your previous character, you can now say, "unto me who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." And the love of Christ is the motive power, that constrains you to go forth upon this momentous work of preaching Christ and him crucified, to dying, perishing sinners. Are you a pastor of a church? You have been listening with attention to your duty, that you are to "preach the word, to be instant in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine." Paul found it necessary on some occasions, to reprove his brethren for their having become worldly-minded and for want of spirituality, as there were at times found among them envyings, strife, and divisions. This

was heart-rending to him, and as much so to every pastor of a church, where this may be found to be the case, especially when they originate from such a trifling affair as the Apostle found to be the case, on one occasion, where a dispute took place about ministers, a thing although seeming so trifling, yet at the same time, very sinful and disgraceful to the cause of religion.

Pastors and people, preachers and laymen, are all members of one body, the church, and all have their separate work to perform, and every one is to be esteemed for his work's sake. "Ye are God's husbandry," and ministers are his servants to cultivate the soil of your hearts. One plants, and another waters, but it is God that must give the increase ; so that if any man wishes to glory, let him glory in the Lord. The Apostle continues his remarks, and in order to make them more interesting and impressive, he changes the figure and compares the church to a building, "Ye are

God's building," for says he, "know ye not that ye are the temple of God?" The grace of God had made of him a wise master-builder, and now he lays the foundation, and administers a caution to his brethren in the ministry, to take heed how they build thereupon, and tells them that Christ is the only foundation that ever has been, or can be laid, upon which this glorious building is being erected. Now brethren, such materials as men, in their natural state of sin, should never have a place in this building, here compared to "wood, hay, and stubble," until they are regenerated and made new creatures in Christ Jesus; being made "lively stones, to build up a spiritual house, to offer up spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God." These lively stones are compared to "gold, silver, and precious stones," on account of that new nature which they received, when born of the Spirit.

Now brethren, our Master has made us builders of this magnificent temple of the

Lord ; let us be cautious what kind of materials we place in this building ; for God himself will try every man's work ; if those persons whom we have been instrumental of bringing into the church, can not give a reason of the hope within them, our work will be lost. They will not appear as stars in the crown of our rejoicing at the last day ; for if they are not consumed with the lustful passions of their own wicked hearts, and thus lead an immoral life, and be cast out of the church, and left to their own destruction, yet they will be burned up among the tares to be burned, at the day of judgment. The poor laborious builder loses all his toil, but "he himself shall be saved so as by fire" [fiery trials].

Ministers should well understand their message, and the Bible is our only standard by which we can test the truth we preach. Let us search diligently that we may come to a perfect knowledge of our Master's will and sacrifice every other con-

sideration that may stand in the way of duty. Let us try to follow the example of our blessed Lord who was meek and lowly of heart going about doing good both to the bodies and souls of men.

If we wish to be instrumental in the conversion of sinners, we must feel deeply concerned for their salvation, and plead earnestly with God; for the residue of the Spirit is with him. Let this motto be written on our banner, "through the cross of Christ, we conquer." Here lies our only hope of success. Our object of preaching, is to enlighten the minds of our hearers. However, there is a way of preaching truth, which leaves the mind more hardened and beclouded than at the commencement. For instance, should we make use of harsh language, calculated to irritate and rouse the angry passions of our hearers, our influence at once ceases to control the mind, and forms a most powerful barrier against the most forcible arguments that we can make use of.

On the other hand, by making use of soft and winning language, we gain a free access to their feelings, and our arguments meet with a more favorable reception and candid reflection ; so that a sympathetic feeling for our hearers, will promise much to our hope of usefulness. The art of rhetoric has a wonderful power to captivate and control the feelings of the heart. This science we have often heard displayed by lawyers in our criminal courts, to that degree that not only the audience, but the judge and jury were melted into tears, so that the jury were almost ready to give their verdict of acquittal. However, when the lawyer on the opposite side of the question makes an equal display of oratory, the two extremes are made to appear, when the mind is brought to a better state of capability to judge righteously. However excellent this science may be, when properly made use of, yet when the object is to pervert truth, it becomes unworthy of a

servant of Christ, or of a place in the pulpit.

Plain language and plain truth, will better suit the wants of the people; when truth can be brought to bear upon the mind. This is needed in order to enlighten the understanding. Never is a servant of Christ better prepared for the pulpit services, than when he comes from his knees where he has been offering up strong cries and tears, for a blessing upon his hearers, and at the same time having his heart and lips touched, as with a live coal from the altar of God. In this case, his tongue will be made as the pen of a ready writer, and the hearers must feel the effects of such preaching.

We should take our Master for our exemplar, in our preaching, and in all the walks of life; embracing every opportunity of doing good, both to the bodies and souls of men, and making use of the daily occurrences, as we pass along. See how the Savior im-

proves the occasion of his meeting the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well. He found her an infidel, and considering her moral character, not a very hopeful subject to receive religious instruction ; yet in the course of his conversation with her, he so simplified the nature of divine grace, by comparing it to the water about which they were conversing, that before she was aware, her mind became so much enlightened, that she seemingly forgot the object for which she came ; for she left her water-pot, and went into the city, no doubt in great haste, to notify her neighbors, that they might come and partake of the blessings of salvation, of which salvation they not only heard from his lips, but on approaching Christ, were made the happy participants of the same blessings, in their own souls.

Let us now pass to consider the most useful mode of preaching. We should have our sermons well digested before we deliver them to the people ; for our Master will

hold us accountable for any deviation from pure Bible truth. This is too obvious to need comment, for we stand between God and the people. We must study the Bible well, that we may receive our message from the mouth of God. The writing of sermons is commendable, where it is practicable. This will serve to improve the mind greatly. When this is done, it is best to leave the manuscript in our studies, until our return from delivering our message to the people. For if we allow it to accompany us to the pulpit, it will soon assume the power of habit, which will bind us with fetters, from which we can not easily extricate ourselves. I have thought that it would be somewhat difficult for us fully to estimate the disadvantages to the speaker as well as to the hearers of being confined to the shackles of written ideas, and thus bar the door against those that might present themselves in the pulpit, although perhaps far more exciting and illustrative to the

mind of the hearer. As to a preacher having the main heads of his discourse before him to refer to, as a mere outline, leaving the mind free to fill up the space unoccupied; against this no one can object.

Again I would ask the question, does not a graceful action in the speaker, give energy to the words he may utter? This will receive no denial. Again, I would ask, have we never discovered a difference between the graceful action of a speaker who reads his sermons, and the one who delivers them in an extemporary form? We must reply in the affirmative; for while the former has the action of his hands and eyes confined to his manuscript, and consequently deprives the whole body of that natural action which gives force to the words, and produces an awkward and unnatural action. A graceful action in the pulpit not only gives force to the words of the speaker, but will be looked upon as ornamental in a grave and pious preacher. The two last qualifications, gravity and piety,

are indispensable, as every subject furnished by the Bible is of this character, and will not admit of any light or trifling language or remarks, calculated to excite laughter, for such merriment does not accord with the solemnities of the house of God. Such preaching may amuse that class of hearers who are noted for their want of solidity of mind, but not the wise and intelligent. I would further remark, that sermons made up of anecdotes, especially, when many of them are of a humorous character, as is often the case with certain eccentric preachers, are not worthy of the pulpit; yet suitable anecdotes may occasionally be introduced to some good purpose, and especially if they are of a very striking character, and calculated to arouse the feelings of the hearers, and thus prepare the mind to receive a more serious impression. Figures drawn from nature, when properly selected, in reference to the subject under consideration, often become very

illustrative, and have a happy effect upon the minds of the hearers.

After all, every thing depends upon the influence of the Holy Spirit to crown our efforts. This must always be borne in mind by a servant of Christ. We may as well exclude the work of Christ from the salvation of a sinner, as the work of the Spirit, for no sinner can ever be saved with either separately. Christ by his sufferings and death has paid the redemption price, but the Spirit must unlock the prison doors, to let the captive go free. Thus we see that salvation is all of free grace, and "not of works, lest any man should boast." The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all! Amen.

THE END.

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